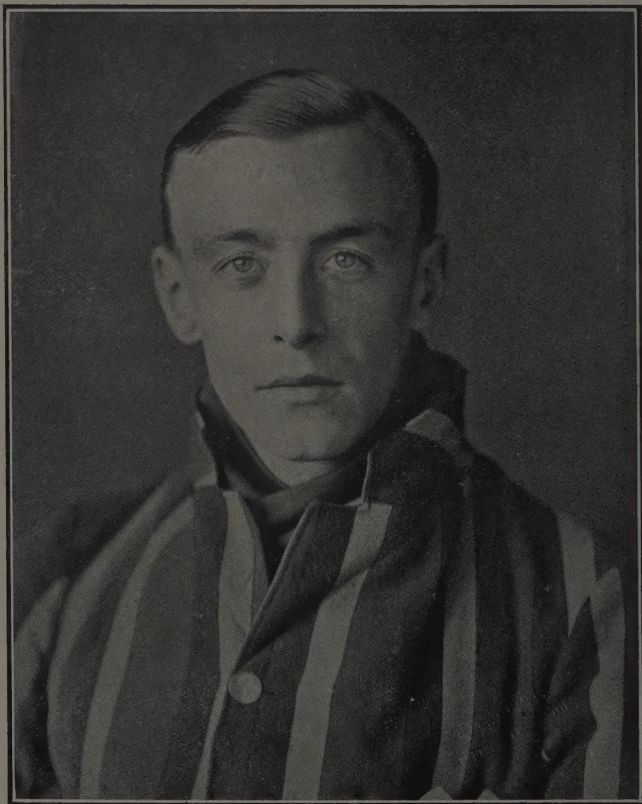


MODERN RUGBY
FOOTBALL

JOHN E. RAPHAEL

K. F. Camaichael.

MODERN RUGBY FOOTBALL



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BY

JOHN E. RAPHAEL

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY

G. BELDAM

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FOREWORD

FOR some few football seasons before the outbreak of war, John E. Raphael contributed weekly articles to *The Pall Mall Gazette*, and these were the nucleus from which this book originated. It was the last thing he did before, in the very early days of the war, he marched with a number of the Old Boys of his school, the Merchant Taylors, to enlist in the Honourable Artillery Company.

Before becoming famous as a footballer he had made his name as a cricketer. He played in his school cricket eleven and in the football fifteen for five years from 1897 onwards, being captain of both in 1900 and 1901.

When he left school in 1901 he had established a school cricket record for the number of runs and captured wickets. Dr W. G. Grace included him in his London County team in August, 1901, and it was a unique spectacle to see the old champion and the youngest recruit playing together in first-class matches, the veteran so obviously delighted with his nursling.

He had also represented the school in fencing in the Public Schools' Competition at Aldershot in 1901, being second. His fencing master said that, given practice, he would match him against any swordsman in Europe. At Oxford he played in the University eleven for three years, beginning in 1903,

in which year he scored 130 runs against Cambridge, while in 1905 he made 99 against Napier's bowling.

For four seasons, beginning in 1903, he played cricket for Surrey, and acted as captain for some time in 1904.

As a cricketer he had good style, a strong defence founded on back play and an ample variety of strokes. On bowling the least bit loose he was very severe. A swimmer (Captain of the Oxford University Swimming Club), an expert at water-polo, a fencer and golfer, he excelled in all sports, doing things with a grace and distinction all his own, but a shoulder which acquired the habit of going out through injuries received at football, and the calls of his profession, put an end practically to his career as a county cricketer.

As a footballer, an article by C. B. Fry, in his magazine for 1905, describes him so well that I quote from it :

“ Raphael's game contains the two rare elements which are essential in a three-quarter of truly ‘ International ’ stamp—adaptability and originality. . . . As he stands in his place on the field one notices that his build is of the kind which makes for strength combined with activity ; that his broad shoulders are ever so slightly rounded, and that they support a head which is the head of a man of energy and determination. But it is when he gets the ball and starts to run that his peculiar gifts assert themselves ; for his progress—in a series of swoops and swerves, now to one side and now to the other, varied by abrupt pauses and feints—gives the impression of a

streak of forked lightning controlled by a thoroughly efficient brake; and it is in this way that he often leaves some three or four would-be tacklers standing helpless, and scores a try entirely 'on his own.' His passes are equally clever and disconcerting, for they are seldom given to a marked man, and that common incident of the ball going out to the wing man, who is brought down without an inch of ground being gained by the movement, is much less common when Raphael is about. Again, when thoroughly hemmed in, with no one to pass to, he can usually be trusted to relieve the pressure with a safe kick that finds touch. For the rest he is good in defence and as clever in anticipating his opponent's moves as he is in cloaking his own, while he possesses in common with all great footballers the capacity of turning up at the right moment."

At Oxford he played in the Rugby football team for four seasons at centre three-quarter back. Between 1902 and 1906 he represented England at Rugby football against Wales three times, Scotland three times, Ireland once, and against New Zealand and France.

He also captained Surrey County Football Club, notably against the New Zealanders.

It is a bare statement of fact to say of him, as was said in many of the obituary notices which appeared after his death, that he was "one of the most accomplished and versatile sportsmen who have left Oxford University since this century dawned."

He went to St John's with a History Scholarship; later his articles and reviews were of distinct literary

merit; indeed, the things of the mind had really foremost place with him, though he found his vocation as a soldier, where his gift for dealing with men came into play. He was a mystic, though to few of his many friends will this have been apparent, and his eyes, according to the Gaelic saying, must have "been touched with the fairy light," for he never saw other people's faults. "They always show me their good side," said he. Physically he might have been the model for one of the Greek statues of athletes; the lines of his form were of rare beauty, denoting strength and agility. His body was a marvellous instrument, and when fit (he was frequently the victim of "flu") perfectly under control of his brain.

Unselfish in all things, he played always for his school, his university, his county, and England—not for himself. During his crowded life, apart from his profession, that of a barrister, he was quite one of the rising young politicians, an ardent worker for Women's Suffrage and for Social Reform, a lecturer on International Law and other subjects, and had made an extensive tour round the world in 1911. In 1904-1905 he was president of the Oxford Palmerston Club, and he stood for Croydon in the Liberal interest in March, 1909, but was not returned, though his pluck whilst fighting a forlorn hope and his boyish enthusiasm made him the hero of his opponents. Utterly unspoilt, he remained the most modest of men; he was once toasted at a public dinner as "the epitome of human magnificence."

Napoleon said we were a nation of shopkeepers, but in the years immediately preceding the war it

was often made a reproach to us that we were a nation of sportsmen.

The nation has been justified of its children, and the young men whose names were as household words a decade and more ago have played the game in the true sense on the field of battle. They were among the first to go, and wide are the gaps in their ranks. Very gallant gentlemen were those splendid youngsters, veritable sons of the gods, taking with them into the Army that spirit of fair play, that discipline, courage, endurance, and loyalty to leaders they had displayed in their games, when they disported themselves as young Titans.

In their homes the memory of those dear living dead men remains ever as an inspiration and benediction.

After enlisting, J. E. R. joined the O.T.C., and on the 12th September 1914 was gazetted to the 8th Battalion of the West Riding—the Duke of Wellington's. Unable to accompany his regiment to the Front, owing to a serious operation to his injured shoulder, he was transferred, in September, 1915, to the 18th Battalion K.R.R.'s, raised by his cousin, Sir Herbert Raphael, Bart., M.P. for West Derby.

In October he was gazetted as A.D.C. on the General Staff—41st Division—and became Camp Commandant. The Division went to France the first week in May, 1916, distinguished itself in the Somme offensive of that year, and helped to win the battle of Messines Ridge on 7th June 1917, the day of the great mine explosion, when two whole German Divisions are said to have been annihilated. Going up to the front line in the late afternoon of that day

to see what advance the troops had made, he was hit by shrapnel, on coming out of a dug-out, and died on the evening of the 11th.

A fellow staff officer, who was with him when wounded, wrote : " I have seen many men in many parts of the world under all sorts of conditions, but never in my experience have I been so impressed by such a magnificent display of sheer pluck and unselfishness." He never uttered one word of complaint ; all his care was for others. Another staff officer said : " All the day of that great battle John was brave as a lion, calm, smiling and debonair, inspiring by his courage all with whom he came in contact."

He was sincerely mourned at Divisional Headquarters by his G.O.C., to whom he was devoted, and by all his fellow-officers and the men, who said of him : " He was to us as a father." He had their welfare in all ways very much at heart, encouraging and taking part in their sports, looking after the cooking and catering for his units, their canteens, their hygiene and sleeping accommodation, their recreation huts ; indeed in everything he was bent " on the Old Division being second to none," and he was often to be found in the front-line trenches, where his cheery presence heartened the men.

Such is the gulf made by this war that of all his sporting contemporaries, and even the older men, none seems available to write this foreword. So the task has fallen to me, his mother, and I look on this book as in the nature of a tribute, not only to my dear son, but also to his brother sportsmen (many of whom were personally well known to him) in Great

Britain, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and India, as well as America, France and other parts of the globe.

The crowded hours of his glorious life, the popularity in society enjoyed by my son, had necessarily the result of taking him much away from the home he loved, where his presence was pure joy and delight. No man was ever a more chivalrous and devoted son or loyal friend. An only child, he was born at Brussels, on the 30th April 1882; died from wounds on 11th June 1917, and was buried on Belgian soil in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinghe. Of him it may be truly said:

“If character be Destiny then is his assured.”

HARRIETTE RAPHAEL.

WILD HATCH, HENDON.

September, 1918.

The following note is by H. B. Hays (Bertie), the well-known secretary of the Old Merchant Taylors' Football Club, which owes so much to his fostering care:—

I feel it a very great privilege to be asked to contribute a few lines to this interesting volume which has been written by such a well-known and honoured sportsman as J. E. Raphael.

During his football career I had the opportunity of watching him play many brilliant games, but it was probably in my own club games that I was mostly interested, and it is no doubt due to the author's initiative that the Old Merchant Taylors'

Football Club has developed the open game to such an extent in recent years. He was a daring, attacking player, and his opponents were always kept on the alert ; his tackling also often left memories of a hard game.

It was always a pleasure to hear John giving advice to the younger members of the Old Merchant Taylors' team ; he skippered that side for years, and one can safely say that the club has never had a more popular skipper.

His Varsity and International careers are so well known that it is quite unnecessary for me to add anything.

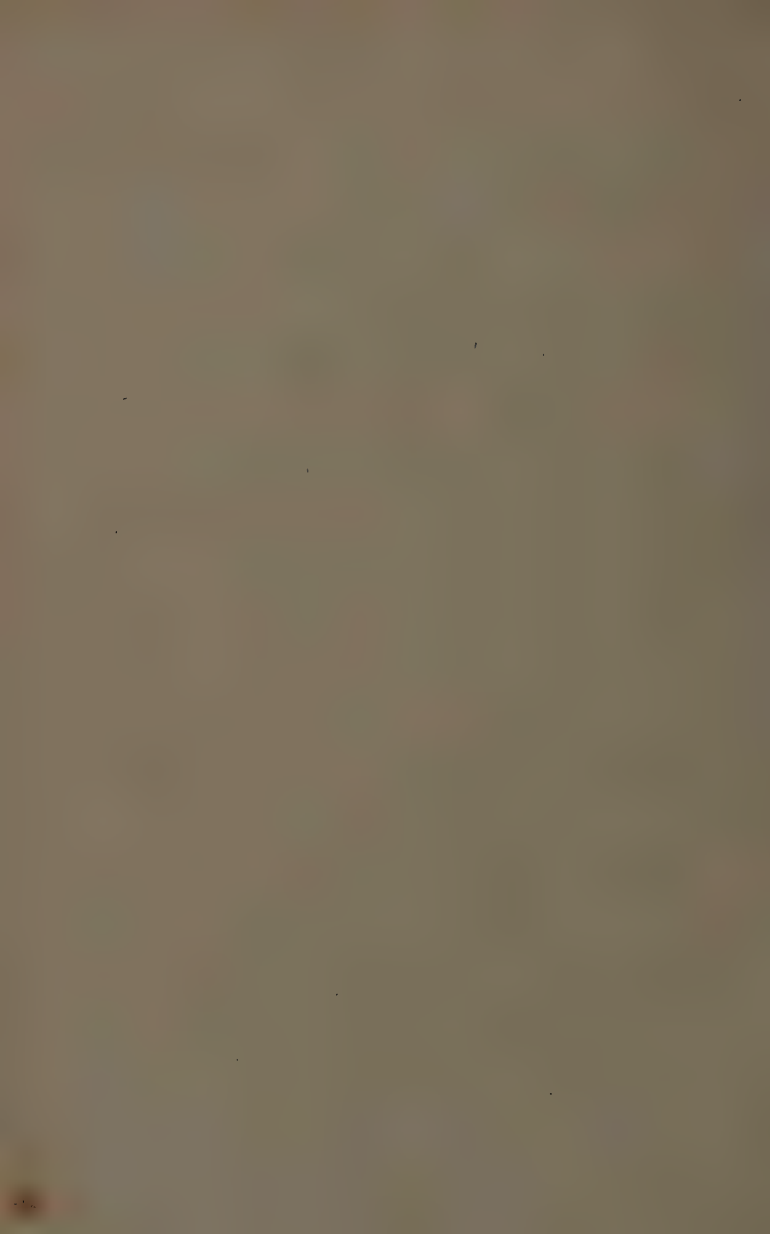
He was a fine sportsman, and loved by all who came in contact with him.

H. B. HAYS.

September, 1918.

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CHAPTER I

ANCIENT DAYS—TO 1871

THIS book is a treatise on Modern Rugby Football, and it is therefore not necessary to discuss at length the origins of the game. The historical aspects have already been most admirably and exhaustively dealt with by Montague—now Sir Montague—Shearman, in his essay in the Badminton Library volume on Football; and also in his little work, "Football: Its History for Two Centuries," written in collaboration with J. E. Vincent.

With the best will in the world to show the ancient lineage of our pastime, it must be confessed that the evidence is too scanty conclusively to prove that the ancient ball games, known to have been played in Greece and in the Roman Empire of classical days, were even analogous to modern Rugby. Certain features naturally there must have been in common; but these could be identified almost as easily as an early variation of any game played with a ball. The Roman *harpastum*, however (in which the object appears to have been to *carry* a ball over certain bounds, against the efforts of the opposition), does seem to have contained germs that may have fructified into football during the centuries.

In England so long ago as Saxon times there is not much doubt that Rugby was known; not certainly in its present form, but with a sufficient number of similar characteristics for us to recognise the various forms as the sources from which the modern development has sprung. Judging from the local accounts that have come down to us, dating from different periods, it is not really to be wondered at the sport had much opposition to contend against. Most assuredly it was "rough and crude." Tradition has it that the Saxons used more than one Dane's head as the ball. This partiality for heads evidently continued. In the "Ledger-Book of Vale Royal Abbey" we find an order, dated October 20, 1320, directing the Justiciar of Chester to "hold an inquiry on the oath of honest and lawful men as to who were the malefactors . . . who villainously slew John de Boddeworth, servant of our well-beloved in Christ, the abbot of Vale Royal at Darnehale, and afterwards cut off his head and carried it away with them, and kicked that head with their feet like a ball, and made their sport therewith." If such proceedings were at all common we cannot blame bishops for preaching "countless sermons" against the "hustlings" (as games of football were designated), which both English and Scottish kings decreed should be "utterly cryed down." But apart from such "bloodie and murthering practices"—to use Elizabethan Stubbes' description of the more regular football methods of his own time—there was a very strong reason why mediæval monarchs and their nobles did not

encourage the game. Football, it must be remembered, was throughout the Middle Ages—in fact till the last century—the sport of the people. It never appealed to the “knightly” classes, whose recreations, as well as their professions, were always connected with the use of arms, interspersed with hunting and horsemanship. But the people were regarded as a very necessary factor in warfare. From their ranks came the bowmen, to whom were due so many triumphs on the battle-field: and anything which took them away from the exercise of their skill with bow and arrow was feared and hated alike by glory-seeking sovereigns and by turbulent vassals. Football, however, was not to be put down: the strongest denunciation was powerless to defeat its popularity with the democracy. In the east, in the west, in the north, and in the towns it persisted; and the various districts played their own variations, whether in streets or through the open country, with diminished brutality it is true, but with unabated vigour. We will not tarry to discuss the descriptions that have come down to us. Suffice to say that all the localities indulged in a pastime known under the generic title of football, that resembles modern Rugby in the salient features. Historically we find that Association has no claim to be descended from the ancient games; though logically, of course, it has a better right to the name of “football.” But though football is only one feature of Rugby, the insinuation that we have wrongfully assumed the birthright is not correct. Those who object to our being

described as "footballers" must blame our very remote ancestors. It would not have been seemly on our part had we thrown over such an ancient family name. The immediate parents both of "Soccer" and "Rugger" were the school games of certain Public Schools. When we think of the hold that football has on the popular imagination, it is a little curious to realise that both codes are derived from what may be termed collaterals. Our mother is "Bigside" at Rugby School, and the part that Old Rugbeians have played in the evolution of the game can hardly be overestimated. Though the Rugby Union was not formed till 1871, modern Rugby had taken firm root several years prior to that date. Blackheath, the oldest of our clubs, was started in 1860. Intended originally for Old Boys of the Blackheath Proprietary School, it was soon found impracticable to limit the source of players so exclusively. Richmond was very little later in the field. By the middle sixties the encounters between these famous teams had become noteworthy events. One great drawback to the game was that hardly two sides played under the same rules: a *modus vivendi* had usually to be arranged beforehand by the two captains, who also settled any contested points that arose while the match was in progress. Referees, be it remembered, are a comparatively late innovation, and this fact alone speaks volumes for the sporting spirit in which the contests were fought out.

Hacking and tripping are two features which distinguish that period from those which were to follow. The former now appears to us to be a

particularly pointless barbarism. It brought out, no doubt, a large amount of pluck, and people who could stand a thorough application of the "art" might be presumed capable of enduring almost anything. We can admit that the process was "hardening" without being in the least convinced that it was an additional recommendation for the game. There is this much to be said in its favour: it helped to keep the play open by breaking up the scrums. There were only some twenty odd Rugger teams in the South at that time, and large numbers of their members had scarcely any knowledge of the principles of play. It was due to their having so many old Public School men in their ranks—especially from Rugby and Marlborough—that Blackheath and Richmond enjoyed such early pre-eminence. Besides quantities of forwards being engaged, it was not the fashion to pack low; but the result apparently was not such excessively prolonged shoving—owing to the "foot-work"—as might have been supposed. When the ball was hacked loose, running, drop-kicking, and rushing were the chief means of making headway. There was a little passing between forwards in the open; but not amongst the outsides—of whom the half-back, except for kicking, was the only really offensive player. He must have had a glorious time. Apart from questions of ignorance and lack of uniformity in the rules, there were other difficulties that the clubs had to contend against. Not the least of these were ground troubles. The playing areas were unenclosed, and it was by no means uncommon to find players

dodging about among spectators, who had encroached over the touch-lines. By the end of the sixty decade clubs had increased in number. The game was beginning to "grip" the North; and Manchester and Liverpool were strong centres. It was felt that the haphazard conditions hitherto prevailing could no longer be tolerated. The desire for a codification of the rules and for some authoritative body to control the game generally was quickened by a fierce newspaper controversy on the brutality and danger of hacking.

Eventually, as we have seen, in 1871 the Rugby Union was brought into existence. From its formation we may date the birth of Modern Rugby Football.

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN RUGBY FROM 1871

THE first work of the newly formed Rugby Union was to draft a code of rules. This was most successfully carried out: the laws of the Rugby School game being taken as a basis. There were some points of difference, however, the most important being that hacking and tripping were abolished. Sad to relate, this very salutary change was by no means an immediate improvement. The old ideas of how to scrummage still remained, and twenty a side continued to be the regulation number for big games. As some fifteen were forwards, it can well be imagined that with the only known method of getting the ball loose no longer allowed, scrummages "degenerated into shoving matches." It was a case of one solid mass of bodies trying to push an equally solid mass backwards. There was little if any sense of combination amongst the members of a side; and this was the condition of the game when the first Internationals between England and Scotland took place. Not long after certain changes in the laws brought about a revolution in tactics. The most important of these was the definite

reduction in the number of players to fifteen. This was followed by a rule that a player when tackled should *immediately* put the ball down. By about 1876 the result of the innovations was observable in a general improvement in the standard of play. Though fifteen a side had been quite common even in the sixties, the forward game had been modelled on twenty-a-side methods.

New ideas now came into prominence. Play became more open. Forwards were the first to be affected. They began to consider other things besides straight shoving ahead. The practice of packing lower, with the head down, came into fashion. This enabled people to see where the ball was, and naturally promoted quicker breaking up. Fast following up, forward tackling, and dribbling in a body became recognised as part of the repertoire of good forwards; and then came passing, which for a time was only indulged in by the front division. The remarkable success of Blackheath in the season 1878-9 placed a hall-mark on the newer methods. Fortunate in the possession of very fast and clever forwards, they showed by their record what could be accomplished by mass foot-work and short passing. One change leads to another. Till then the usual outside formation had been: two backs, one three-quarter, and two halves. Against forwards, however, who could be effectively aggressive by *combined* play in the open, one three-quarter was not sufficient. A back therefore was brought up to help him. A little later—but rather for the different purpose of furthering outside attack—

a third three-quarter was added : this time taken from the pack. The modern conception of play (*i.e. circa* 1881) was now coming in. The first "moderns," in every sense of the term, were the Oxford fifteens of the early eighties. Under the splendid guidance of Harry Vassall, there was produced a series of remarkable teams, whose strategy revolutionised the game and to whom we still owe a great debt of gratitude. To Rotherham is due the credit of reducing half-back play to a science. The art of the half-back had previously had many a brilliant exemplar. The man we are now talking of was probably as good as any ; but he will live in history not so much because of his own excellence, but because he was the first to realise the full possibilities of the position he occupied. Appreciating the fact that combined effort among the outsides would yield a greater harvest in the long run than the finest individual striving, he set himself to feed those most advantageously placed for scoring. He actually passed to his three-quarters ; a proceeding till then unknown ! It must not be thought that he was a mere conduit pipe between the forwards and threes. He "fed" by means of "openings." His bewildering feints were too much for those unused to such methods. They never knew whether to tackle him or his neighbour. In making an opening for his comrade, he not unseldom found one waiting for himself. We may note in passing that Oxford at this time had some sixteen Internationals in residence. Furthermore, we have it on Vassall's own authority that places would have been found in an absolutely

full team for H. W. Cave and A. R. Paterson, neither of whom obtained their caps!

What names to conjure with there were among those Oxford backs! Besides Rotherham, his half-back partner, Grant-Asher, was almost equally celebrated. The full-back was Tristram; and most good judges who can speak from personal knowledge declare that he was the finest there has ever been. Then there was Wade; and if only half the tales of his terrible strength and prowess be veracious, we of a younger generation can well imagine that "it was more than mortal man could do to stop him when he meant business." In addition there were Evanson, C. P. Allen, and poor George Lindsay, the latter a most brilliant attacking player. And the forwards were of the same calibre as the outsides. Seeing that the "Oxford style" of play was the pattern on which the best strategy of the eighties was moulded, I will here set down what one of the famous pack himself told me about their forward tactics. First and foremost they *did* shove. Then, as soon as the ball was loose, they broke fairly quickly, and when in possession either dribbled *en masse* or passed among themselves or with their outsides. They broke, so far as possible, towards the open, the most probable side for assisting in any movement that might be going on. They made no effort to "hook" the ball as it came into the scrum. In fact the ball was controlled in the front row, and the control was maintained by straight-ahead scrummaging. Definite heeling was unknown, but it would appear that at times they did push over the ball and leave

it for the half to deal with. Wheeling was another art that had yet to be discovered; but there was an equivalent in "foiking." This means of getting the ball out must have been very difficult to accomplish, for there was no front row shield to protect the manœuvre. It consisted in working the ball to one side of the scrum and extricating it with a swing of the foot—when it would be possible for those in the know either to go off on a rush or to give it to a half. Perhaps a good opportunity did not present itself on one side. Then the greatest skill was needed to induce the ball over to the other. E. T. Gurdon tells me that occasionally one of the wing front row men would help a "foik," more particularly when the scrum had slightly slewed, by pushing laterally and thereby working the opponents round and away from the open side. The effect of this was almost precisely that of wheeling.

Oxford, however, was by no means the only great fifteen of this epoch. Apart from London clubs like Blackheath and Richmond, Lancashire and Yorkshire possessed equally redoubtable teams. Bradford, though beaten in an historic game by Oxford, were certainly their compeers. It was a Bradford man who revolutionised three-quarter play in much the same fashion that Rotherham had altered the whole outlook of the half-back. Rawson Robertshaw taught the lesson that a centre three-quarter's prime duty was to make openings for his wings.

Robertshaw's work was the completion of Rotherham's. The edifice of combination was

now finished. What has been done subsequently can only be regarded in the nature of amplification or ornamentation.

By the addition of an extra three-quarter, the same results were almost contemporaneously being achieved in Wales. As the four three-quarter system will be discussed subsequently, I will confine myself here very briefly to considering how the distinct drawback of having to oppose nine forwards by eight was largely overcome. In the first place, the practice of heeling the ball out behind the scrum had been growing during the eighties, and with this had developed the habit among the front row men of scraping for the ball (later, this developed yet further by the wing man definitely swinging his outside foot to secure possession) instead of relying solely on the then more orthodox method of genuine scrummaging. But with a lessened number, when it was a question of forwards doing something themselves, the prospects of pushing straight ahead, or of "foiking" (with the ball in the front row), were naturally not so promising. Wheeling was gradually adopted. This consisted in the front row forwards getting the ball, putting it behind them, and then pushing towards one side, thereby screwing the other pack round, while the back row men went off on the other. Strictly speaking, wheeling is still illegal; for as soon as the ball is behind them, the front row men are off-side. It became, however, a convention that no forwards were off-side so long as the ball remained in the scrum and until they had had reasonable opportunity of breaking up. It is

difficult to discover when wheeling first came in. It is certainly a movement that ingenious Welsh brains worked out in its perfection, and I am not at all sure that it was fully developed much before 1891. The so-called wheeling of the years immediately preceding that date seems to have been more akin to "screwing" the scrum—a very different proceeding from the regular wheel. The great Newport teams of the early nineties assuredly knew the right method and nonplussed opponents by their novel tactics in much the same way as my old Varsity had done some years previously. The Old Merchant Taylors were Newport's disciples and were, I believe, the first London team to discover the real secret. —

During all these years Scottish forwards had maintained their reputation as the most conscientious scrummagers in all the four countries. Their forwards were not so clever in their tactics, but their scrum work and their rushes made them perhaps the most formidable packs there were to meet.

Both Ireland and Wales attained their International majority after the other two countries. The former has always had great difficulties to contend against. Cut off from easy communication with the rest of the football world, she has developed a game that has been comparatively little affected by outside movements. Her forwards have always dominated the situation; and her backs have ever been strenuous defenders, with relatively small opportunity for developing combined attack. The history of Wales has very largely been the history

of the four three-quarter system—of which more hereafter.

I have alluded to the rise of the Northern clubs. The popularity of Rugby in the great industrial centres of Lancashire and Yorkshire, more particularly from about 1882-92, was enormous. And the play well deserved it. While possessing any number of outsides of the highest class, like Robertshaw, Lockwood and Co., the Yorkshire air around 1890 seemed to produce forwards of a type that have rarely, if ever, been equalled. Big, powerful, brawny, and heavy, they had a capacity for shoving that we can scarcely credit. They were as fast as they were heavy. Their foot-work was on a par with their pace, and their combined rushes were at times more deadly even than the Scottish brand. When England could command the services of men like Hickson, Toothill, Holmes, Bromet, Bradshaw, Bedford, their opponents might well look for "squalls." All, however, was not right with the English body politic in the early nineties. The trouble was in the North. Popularity meant large gates. The clubs became wealthy. Most of the players were wage-earners who could ill afford to lose the money that getting off for football frequently entailed. Theoretically, a very plausible case could be made out, not so much for professionalism as for compensation for broken time. It was strengthened by what appeared to be a question of far-seeing statesmanship. Every true lover of Rugger rejoiced that the game had appealed to all classes of the community; and what harm, it was asked, could there

be in making it possible for more working men to participate—through their not having to suffer financial loss by playing? What was the difference in principle between paying actual out-of-pocket expenses and in compensating a man for broken time? So far as it went, the argument was very powerful; but it did not go far enough. Fortunately there were strong and discerning men in control of the Rugby Union at the time. They appreciated the true inwardness of the situation and realised that compensation for broken time was but the thin end of the wedge by which professionalism, naked and unashamed, was attempting to undermine the foundations of the game.

The situation was desperate; but the defenders of amateurism—all honour to them—did not flinch. They used the knife with drastic determination—and saved Rugby Football as a *sport*. It is idle to deny that the formation of the Northern Union has resulted in serious loss to us. So heavy, in fact, was the blow that Rugby in the North has not yet recovered. It is, however, in an advanced stage of convalescence, and its prospects are healthier than ever they were before. Time further has proved the arguments by which broken time compensation were supported to be fallacious. Do we find that more working men have been encouraged to take up football under Northern Union rules? Can it be suggested that the Northern Union game is anything but a spectacle, played by professionals as a means of livelihood, for purposes of securing gate money? Whether that be a good or a bad thing need not concern

us now. The point is that it has ceased to be a recreation and has become a business. Do Northern Union clubs foster the game in their own localities irrespective of the talent worth buying up? The answer can be given in the premiums paid to likely players whose labour they purchase in various quarters of the globe. Those premiums are not paid to encourage a game but to promote a spectacle which will attract a crowd. That is business—and not always lucrative business either for the clubs or for the men who sell their services.

Qua spectacle incidentally. It may have been the case formerly—I cannot say, because I do not know—that the Northern Union provided a better show than our own teams could offer. Is this true nowadays? Most Rugby men appear to think so, on the very unreasonable grounds that they are entirely ignorant of the other code. Personally I venture the opinion—formed without prejudice—that at its worst the Northern Union game is infinitely more tedious; and at its best is certainly not more exciting, more attractive—or more skilful—than dear old Rugby.

Of all the names connected with Rugby Football, that of Rowland Hill looms largest. He is indeed one of the great personalities of the world, and what he has done for the game cannot adequately be expressed. May he long be spared to give us the benefit of his counsels! His work as Hon. Secretary of the Rugby Union, as legislator, as referee—and as friend of all who uphold the best interests of the game—causes us to look up to him with feelings of grateful and affectionate respect.

Another big man in football history—past and present—is E. Temple Gurdon. I am not sure that the labour and indefatigable attention he has given for so many years to the thankless task of selecting International teams, and to the administration of affairs in general, ought not to be the real reasons of his fame and popularity. Of course they are not so considered. Apart from his personal qualities, we think of him rather as one of the finest of forwards and as the great captain who did so much for Cambridge, Richmond, and England. He and his brother Charles were gluttons for scrummaging, and their combined play in the open was the feature of many a hard-fought match.

L. Stokes, who captained Blackheath and England during the late seventies, once dropped a goal against Scotland from somewhere in the neighbourhood of his own twenty-five line! Stokes was not only a good runner and a dropper of goals; he was a splendid tactician and general to boot.

When we think of some of the best teams and players of yore, can we confidently assert that a higher level of achievement has been attained during the last quarter of a century? Perhaps we should be right in saying that we have now a higher *average* standard of performance; but he would indeed be a bumptious and an ignorant partisan of “modernism” who suggested that the giants of preceding generations were not as brainy in their strategy and as resourceful in their play as any we could pit against them. To consider only a very few of those who would be eligible

to represent the old regime, will cause us to pause ere hastily assuming that with all the advantages of additional experience that was denied to them, we should be able to "field" a side capable of standing up to such doughty opponents. Confining our attention to the later period with which this chapter deals, and indiscriminately omitting household football names—to prevent the list from developing into a catalogue of famous players—what a plethora of talent there is to draw upon!

Besides those already mentioned, we could have amongst the forwards, such men as Reid, M. C. M'Ewen and M'Millan of Scotland; H. G. Fuller, C. J. B. Marriott—now secretary of the Rugby Union—W. G. Clibborn, and the redoubtable "Sammy" Woods, of England; some magnificent Irishmen including V. C. Le Fanu; and well, dozens and dozens of the same calibre. Don Wauchope and Martin Scott—both of Cambridge—are halves that must be included in the select group of "All-timers." Of three-quarters, could Stoddart be left out of any side when in his prime? Could A. J. Gould? Could R. L. Alston? What about M'Lagan—or Bolton?

CHAPTER III

THE GAME OF TO-DAY

WE have seen that progress in Rugby football has been achieved by the impetus of definite ideas that have acted and interacted with various degrees of intensity at different periods. The effect of any given impetus has only carried us a certain way. When the lesson has been thoroughly appreciated, and its object has become an integral part of the play, a fresh *motif* has been found ready at hand to bring us to a further stage of development. Revolutions have played an extremely important part in the history of Rugby. Many of them, in the end, practically wiped out the pre-existing state of affairs, and made it incumbent on those who were ambitious of attaining a high standard of excellence to study what was virtually another science and to put in practice a novel art. The abolition of hacking, the reduction in the number of players from twenty to fifteen, the introduction of passing, such changes in forward play as heeling and wheeling, and the establishment of the four three-quarter system, were all events of this character. All were iconoclastic in their tendency, and rendered those who looked back liable to the fate of Lot's wife. In spite of

threatened innovations, such as a still further reduction in the number of players and the advent of a new formation, which seemed very imminent after the New Zealand visit, matters have gone on more or less quietly during the last twenty years. In saying this I do not mean that the game has not undergone a great change. If a good Rugby match of the present day be compared with its equivalent of even the beginning of the century, it will at once be seen that there is a very distinct difference. Quite what has happened it may be difficult to say. The laws, except for minor differences, are the same; nothing particularly striking in the shape of newly discovered tactics has been adopted; and yet there is undoubtedly a fresh atmosphere. Another point of view has come into focus.

In former days, to keep the other side out was the essential consideration. Offence was comparatively a subsidiary problem. Nowadays, in their relative importance, the two great branches of the game have changed places. How to be aggressive has taken the premier position in our thoughts. While the old relationship existed, the function of attack could not be appreciated in all its aspects. The tendency was to assume that defence and attack were diametrically opposed, and that under most circumstances it was too risky to endeavour to turn the former into the latter. Doubtless this was true under the old regime; but with altered conditions experience shows that the attendant risks are not necessarily great—and anyhow are at times well worth taking. Our views accordingly

have been very considerably modified on the point. It is due to the four three-quarter system that these altered conditions have been brought about. The four three-quarter formation is by no means a recent innovation. It originated in Wales and was generally adopted in the land of its birth, so far back as the eighties. Its "mysteries" have been a part of Welsh daily football life ever since. Her big clubs very early on were giving brilliant exhibitions of its working and were defeating all the "foreign" teams they met. In the Rev. F. Marshall's book, "Rugby Football," published in 1892, W. H. Gwynn, the great Welsh half of the previous decade, gave most valuable hints (which, in fact, cannot be bettered even now) on how to get the best out of the system. There has been no lack, then, of example or precept. And yet, with certain exceptions for certain matches, clubs outside the Principality seem only recently to have discovered its underlying principles and the real object its founders had in view. Why another player was wanted outside the scrum was to increase the prospects of a score. The additional man made three-quarter combination really effective by rendering short, sharp passing practicable.

How is it that we, in London especially, have taken so long to learn the lesson? For the first part of the time—that is to say, during the nineties—we were still imbued with the old ideas and traditions of the game. Clubs resisted the new formation as long as they possibly could; they adopted it only when compelled to by force of circumstances. They considered the additional

outside almost solely from the defensive point of view. More time was spent in deploring his loss from the forwards than in bringing him effectively into the attacking line. It is hard for us nowadays to realise what a change was produced by the introduction of an extra attacking unit. The whole idea of position had to be modified, the whole idea of combination had to be reconsidered, the whole idea of the "geography" of the field had to be recast. In defence, as well as in attack, a new era came into being. Naturally some time was required for things to settle down, but it cannot be said that great efforts were made to get the true "hang" of the theory. Many failed to "see the forest for the trees"; and perceiving the use that the Welshmen made of the short hand-to-hand transfer, they conceived the idea that passing was virtually an end in itself. In consequence anyone who did not part with the ball more or less immediately was liable to be severely censured for selfish play. The result was much aimless passing from touch-line to touch-line, which as often as not lost ground and but rarely helped the attack along. This misinterpretation of the art of aggressive combination had much to do with the pooriness of English football in the early part of the century. It was a lean period not so much because there was no talent available, but because what there was was misapplied. In the Metropolis especially things were deplorable: hardly a team was worthy to be called first-class. To make matters worse, the inferior quality of the attacking food caused indigestion in the defence. The bright

spot in England was the south-west. There the clubs were well able to hold their own with their Welsh neighbours. They had quickly fallen into the four three-quarter system, and their best teams were extraordinarily good. Some of their tactics, however, were not regarded with the greatest favour. Those more particularly noticed were the little, often dirty, tricks that certain of their players were in the habit of indulging in. The real cleverness and excellence of their combined movements were frequently lost sight of in the indignation caused by the excrescences that unfortunately were too common. Things have altered very considerably since then. There is no more pleasing feature in present-day football than the improvement in western methods of play. The crowds, too, seem to have a greater appreciation of the merits of both sides. Without casting aspersions on the game of, or the methods adopted in, Association, it would appear that its attractions in some of the big provincial centres have taken away from the Rugby game many of those most undesirable supporters whose one idea of sport (?) is the victory of their own side, without any reference to the means adopted for attaining that result.

There is no question that the visit of the New Zealanders in 1905 was largely responsible for breaking the spell of decline that had bound English football. The effect, however, was not very immediate, nor was it startlingly direct. The great lesson, it seems to me, that we learnt from that famous team was that combination is not a mechanical affair. As this teaching gradually

percolated through the rather clayey soil of London football, it became recognised that in order to be a valuable unit in the four three-quarter game, a man has *not* to sacrifice his individuality. A fuller measure rather is required from him. Its expression is diverted into other and wider channels, where the currents are stronger and where greater mental effort is needed to steer clear of the Charybdis of selfishness on the one hand, and the Scylla of unintelligent passing on the other. There can be no question that the game of to-day is much faster, and it is gratifying to observe that players last out the fiercest contests as well, if not better, than was ever the case before. This means that more attention is paid to training and to keeping fit. With an improved standard of physical condition, players are able to, and we find that they do, attempt things that otherwise would have been impossible for them. As a corollary we have developed brainier and more attractive methods.

Till a few years ago a main principle of strategy was to keep up a continuous attack until success had been attained; or the defence had prevailed and the siege had been raised. It was considered of prime importance to remain in the enemy's territory, and the culminating efforts were not attempted till near their line. The method was to wear down the defence till it gave way, and to give the defenders no opportunity of relieving the pressure. Any movement, therefore, of which the defending side could take advantage, in the event of its failing, was not helpful to the scheme. We appear now to be altering our tactics. No

longer do we regard our position in the field of play as *the* factor which decides whether we should be aggressors or defenders. Even the old maxim, under no circumstances to pass inside your own twenty-five line, is practically obsolete. The word "maxim" is scarcely strong enough to apply to such a principle. It was rather, to use the phraseology of the constitutional lawyer, "a convention of the constitution," which, though not to be found in the rules, had such strong customary authority behind it that it had all the binding force of a law.

We are apparently changing also our ideas of where is the most favourable part of the field from which to start attack, and are beginning tentatively to consider whether we are not more likely to score from outside rather than from inside our opponents' "twenty-five." The reason for this paradox is that the nearer we get to their line, the more concentrated becomes their defence.

A great excellence of recent play is the larger vista of possibilities that has been opened out. The higher scoring is a fairly reliable test of our progress in this direction. The pointless draw is of a much less frequent occurrence. Without in the least attempting to minimise the high quality of the defence which two evenly balanced sides must show to prevent each other from scoring at all, there is no *prima facie* evidence to indicate that the game thus played was a good one, or that the attack on either side was difficult to meet.

On the other hand, a draw of, say, four tries each must have had exciting moments, at any

rate. Now strange as it may sound, capacity for scoring often acts as a very definite stimulus to defence. The moral factor plays a much larger part in sport of every kind than most people give it credit for. Hopefulness concentrates attention on the work to be done in a manner that would not otherwise be possible. Hopelessness, on the other hand, has rarely anything but an evil effect on play. If you think you are going to lose, it doesn't really matter very much whether it is by one or two tries. It is not that men consciously slacken off their efforts; but they do not put in that little extra bit of energy that makes the real difference. The saving of a try will become a matter of greater importance when the defenders feel that they are quite likely to score themselves at any moment.

In an attacking game, as a matter of fact, a higher standard of defensive capacity must be attained if scoring is to be prevented. There will be more of those difficult "half-turn" tackles to make when the attackers are giving and taking their passes at full speed. Players who stand still and "lob" the ball to someone else are comparatively easy to bring over. It is when they are travelling fast and can get an extra yard or so before having to transfer that they are so hard to secure.

The tackler has then to turn ere "diving." This means that he has to change his balance altogether and to take off from the other foot to the one originally intended. It is obvious that in such circumstances he is much easier to elude.

Even when a large number of tries are scored against a side, it does not necessarily mean that their defence is bad ; it may simply prove the scoring capacity of their opponents.

Let nobody make any mistake as to my meaning. I have always preached the gospel of attack, but *never* as an alternative to defence. It is a pure waste of time to devise clever try-getting schemes, when the whole result is nullified by the counter-efforts of opponents which could have been prevented by strenuous tackling. Because the half-turn tackle is more difficult is no reason why it should not be brought off as regularly as a more simple one. There has been a tendency recently amongst certain players to lay themselves out solely for aggression and apparently to ignore entirely the necessity of keeping the other side from scoring. Such conduct cannot be too strongly denounced. There is all the difference in the world between making legitimate, or even risky, opportunities for attack ; and in concentrating one's defending energies on such doubtful expedients as continually trying to intercept—and as continually being bluffed by the “dummy.” Weakness in defence cannot be excused by excellence in attack. Such an argument is a travesty of the maxim the “best defence is attack.”

The great defect in the present style of play is the almost total disappearance of the distinctive features of forward tactics connected with scrummaging. I endorse every word that V. H. Cartwright has to say in a subsequent chapter on the subject. The forwards of to-day seem utterly

incapable of keeping the ball in the tight. Quite as much from the point of view of attack as defence, it is a great loss to the game that the art of scrummaging should have dwindled to "hooking" and "heeling" alone. Think what an asset has been discarded in the not-very-old-fashioned "wheeling"! We have, it is true, some excellent fast breaking-up packs, who do splendid defensive work in getting amongst the opposing outsides and breaking up their movements. We still see fine rushes in the open. But wheeling, alike on the enemy's goal-line and in the home quarters, can be made the most deadly weapon in the armoury of a side. Other things being at all equal, there is no gainsaying the fact that a team which rediscovered the arts of wheeling and of—on occasion—controlling the ball in the scrum by a little downright shoving, would beat (until the others had learnt the lessons also) all its rivals. And the result would be attained *not* at the expense of outside attack. The latter rather would be helped enormously. The opponents, for one thing, would not be able to concentrate so entirely on its prevention: and the *psychological* moments for having the ball out might be seized on where better control existed. It is pitiable to witness some of the risky proceedings people have to adopt in their own twenty-five, simply because the forwards cannot keep the ball in the tight and do something with it themselves.

Speaking as a former three-quarter myself, I advocate a better balancing than at present exists of the work to be done by the front and back

divisions. This does not, of course, mean that forwards should not continue to play to their outsides; but it does mean that they should be able to take the game into their own hands when occasion demands it—when they are the most likely people to help on the interests of the side.

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF MODERN PLAY

RUGGER is a sport that demands thought and mental concentration, if any progress is to be made. It is really surprising how unintelligently many people go about it; even when they are by no means ignorant of the points of the game. It would appear at times as if they considered their knowledge a dangerous thing to apply to actual play. But apart from knowledge, it is the utter disregard of what one imagines would be the ordinary dictates of common-sense that is so deplorable. There is too much brainless play, of which an eye twinkle of thought would show the folly.

It will doubtless be objected that there is no time to think when a movement is actually taking place. This is quite correct up to a point. The game would come to a standstill if every little detail were thought over carefully whilst it was being carried out. The mind therefore must be trained to be as alert, as active, and as quick as the body is expected to be. It must be educated to the habit of instantaneous perception and decision; to be able to take in the essentials of a situation at a glance, and to act without delay.

Naturally it needs an effort, possibly a great effort, to induce one's intelligence department to work with requisite celerity; but it can be done, and it is, at anyrate, absolutely necessary to try.

Now it is obvious that the less detail one has to think about, the better it will be. The more one can leave to educated instinct as regards what may be described as the mechanical part of one's duty, the greater the number of fractions of a second one can allow for the contemplation of the actual circumstances of the position. There is no reason why such an all-important precept as "Don't slow down to pass" should not be made so completely a portion of one's football self that one will never have consciously to consider whether it is being obeyed or not.

"Start quickly," "take your passes going at full speed," the proper method of falling on the ball, or of kicking it, are among the other factors of successful play that can be so thoroughly absorbed as to be safely trusted to "sub-consciousness" and instinct. The really good card player has trained his memory—only by concentrated effort, it should be noted—to such a pitch that he remembers quite automatically the cards as they fall. He can devote the whole of his attention to playing his own hand correctly and to placing the ownership of the unplayed cards. Very similarly, a footballer can acquire such a mastery over fundamental tactics that no longer need he worry himself *how* he does a thing, but can allow his mentality to be concerned with the far more delightful consideration of the "when." Concen-

tration, I know, does not come easily to many. It is a condition precedent, however, to quick thinking, which is itself a condition precedent to the enjoyment of football's higher pleasures.

There must be no trusting, of course, to luck as a substitute for educated instinct, and it is no good concentrating on the possibilities of a situation if the essential preliminaries to bringing that situation about have been overlooked or left to chance. An example, perhaps, will make my meaning clear. It is obviously useless to think of the fine opening there may be for a successful movement through tackling a man so properly that the ball flies from his grasp—if you fail to tackle him at all. The actual tackle must be the first consideration, and a consideration that under no circumstances must be lost sight of.

Position. It is impossible to be a successful Rugby footballer without a full appreciation of what is meant by position. One finds many people even in first-class football who must have a depression where their bump of locality ought to be. The slightest geographical sense would surely prevent them from getting into some of the situations they are to be found in.

One of the great causes of poor backing up is being out of position, and there cannot be successful combination unless the other man has placed himself for the proper taking of a pass.

The first thing that strikes me about so many lower teams is that the backs do not stand far enough behind each other for attack. The result is that the line can never be got really going, and



OUTSIDES STANDING FOR ATTACK



THE PASS MISSED !

the movement has not nearly the same scope for its operation.

Now a team cannot attack and defend at the same time. It must either do one or the other. You cannot score tries while the other side have the ball, and the referee will probably have a good deal to say if you tackle your opponents while your own men are passing. If this point be thoroughly grasped, it will be easier to realise that there is a great difference in the best positions that outsides should take up for the alternative purposes.

"Up" for defence, and "back" for attack is the principle to go on. The "half-way-house" policy, in this case, has nothing to commend it. In the lean years of the English football, one great reason which precluded our achieving a victory in Wales was because our outsides had not the courage to be right back for attack; they were too afraid of the other side to give their own abilities an opportunity.

Let us consider what happens if men are out of position when a chance presents itself. The man who gets the ball has either to be moving backwards to do so or else he is standing still. He will be too near his opponents to be able to get up speed ere passing. The pass, therefore, will probably be a bad one—at anyrate, not a crisp, wasting-no-time specimen. The recipient will be at a similar disadvantage. The ball will come straight at him, instead of in front; and an enemy will probably land on him at the same time as the ball. If anything does happen, it is the defending side that is the more likely to benefit.

How many of us, I wonder, appreciate the connection between time and distance on the football field? Just think what the waste of only a quarter of a second involves when it is translated into terms of yards and feet. The standard time for a hundred yards is ten seconds: that means that the best runner will cover ten yards in one second, or two and a half yards in a quarter of that time. Even a slow man will certainly be able to travel *at the rate* of one hundred yards in twelve seconds on turf. Twelve into a hundred goes something over eight; therefore a quarter of a second in Rugger is roughly the equivalent of two yards. The waste, then, of only a quarter of a second means the loss of two yards. An instance occurs to me which bears out so admirably the relation between time and distance that I may be pardoned for mentioning it, though I was personally concerned. During the Scotland v. England match of 1906 I was tackled on the line, and consequently did not get what had looked like a certain try. Most of the papers reported that I had failed to obtain the try simply through lack of pace, and were inclined to blame the Selection Committee for not having chosen a faster runner. As a matter of fact, in this special instance, the question of speed ought never to have entered in. The prime cause of the mishap was a "slowing-up" pass earlier in the movement. To take the ball at all, I had to check myself dead, and besides being thrown out of my stride and having to re-start, I was obliged slightly to change my direction in order to clear an opponent who was originally

quite out of range. How many fractions of a second were lost over this it is difficult to say; but as I was brought down within three feet of the line by a magnificent tackle, it seems that, in the ordinary course of events, I should have had a fairly easy run-in. I do not give this example to vindicate myself, but in the hope that it may stimulate some players to further exertion, if they realise how thin is the dividing line between success and failure. Don't waste the fractions, and the yards will take care of themselves. A matter of feet rather than of yards is the deciding factor on most occasions in attack and defence alike. When we talk of a team taking advantage of its opportunities, we really mean that that team wastes fewer feet than its rival.

The "Point of View" of Combination. It stands to reason that the less capacity in offence a side possesses, the less likelihood there is of a movement being successful under adverse conditions. The more diffidence therefore a team feels in its powers the more careful it should be to eliminate anything that may tell against it. Many teams are beaten long before they go on the field; not because they are lacking in courage, but because they are too modest in the estimation of their own capacity. If it comes to a choice of evils, I am inclined to think that over-confidence in football is less fatal than its opposite. To die bravely is a noble determination; but it does not win matches. Now the more formidable one's opponent may be, the fewer advantages can one afford to give him. What England used so regularly to give

away to Wales was the very comforting feeling that they need not worry about our attack; but could devote all their energies to taking as many points as possible off us. However good our defence may have been, it was pretty certain to give way in time against continuous onslaughts. The lapse may only have been momentary, but it probably meant a try. Wales could afford to make mistakes, whilst we could not; and the knowledge of this fact gave them a confidence which made those mistakes few and far between. The weaker the side, then, the more carefully must they see to it that whatever capacity they do possess is used to the full. What they cannot achieve by individual excellence they must attempt by combined effort. The ideal for them to aim at is that every member of the fifteen—the full-back included—should participate in every movement. This proposition sounds, perhaps, a little startling, but its truth is incontrovertible. I do not mean that everyone should necessarily try to get as near as they can to the man with the ball; but that they should get as quickly as possible to the position in the field where they are most likely to be useful if wanted. In London football, particularly, we suffer severely by reason of the fact that many people on parting with the ball seem to think they have no further responsibility or concern with the game for the next few minutes.

Quite apart from not getting up immediately after being tackled, and apart even from feeling that their work is over for the time being when

they have passed or have collared an opponent, we find men standing still and watching what is going on, as if they were spectators of, and not actual participants in, the match.

It would appear that they were unselfishly allowing others to have the full credit of any successful operation, or meanly shifting the burden of failure from their own shoulders; according to the circumstances, and to the way their action, or rather inaction, is regarded. As a matter of fact, in most cases they are actuated by no motives whatsoever, either good, bad, or indifferent. They have simply allowed their attention to wander from what they are doing and are thinking of other things; or worst of all, are "wool-gathering," and are not thinking of anything in particular.

There is nothing so annoying as exhibitions of this character, and nothing is more detrimental to the prospects of a good contest. It is this standing still and watching which has given London footballers such an unenviable reputation for slack play. There is no excuse for it. It is not a question of ignorance.

Backing-Up. A great feature of the New Zealanders' play was the care they took in finishing off their movements. It was rarely left to one man to have to score a try all on his own; almost invariably he was backed up and supported by others; so that if anything went wrong at the last moment there would be somebody at hand ready to render assistance. In the large majority of cases the backers-up will have nothing to do; but even then their zeal is not wasted.

The moral support of knowing that help can be obtained if wanted can hardly be overestimated, and the side that possesses this valuable asset starts with a great deal in hand.

Backing-up is the chief essential to perfect combination. You will never find the fifteen men who form a side playing as a combination unless each of them is ready to be a potential if not an actual participant in every movement that takes place. This requires explanation.

What is meant by "potential"? How on earth can a full-back, for instance, take part "potentially" or otherwise in, let us say, a break-away from touch? In answering this question, let us consider what he ought to be doing under the circumstances. It will be agreed that if he merely stands still and lets his attention wander, so that it "browseth where it may," or permits his eyes to study the features of that really charming girl in the stand who is so refreshingly keen on her brother doing well in the game—he is not doing all that can reasonably be expected of him. He ought at least to be watching current events on the football field.

I would put his duty higher: not only should he be watching (current events, of course, not the sweet maiden) with all his heart and soul, but he must be deciding when and therefore where he is next likely to be called on to do something himself. Perhaps there is a prospect of an opposing outside picking up and getting clean away. The back, then, must be getting into position to deal with that gentleman. I have taken an extreme

case, but even here I suggest that by being prepared to meet eventualities our back is indirectly taking part in the movement. He is helping to prevent possible failure from having disastrous consequences, and thereby he may render the most important service to his side. It is by developing his sense of locality and by trying to anticipate the probable trend of events that every player can become a potential factor in every movement.

I have several times noticed, when his own people were passing on the other side of the ground, a wing three-quarter standing just in front of the passing line. If he had fully appreciated the significance of backing-up, he would have taken care to be behind, so that if a kick across did come his way he would not be off-side.

To develop combination to its highest pitch, it will often have to be assumed that people are where they ought to be, in order that a movement may be continued successfully.

This, I know, is a very dangerous proposition to advance, and I write about it with some hesitation and diffidence. It certainly appertains only to advanced football, and cannot persistently be carried to its logical conclusion. Nevertheless, I believe the greatest teams of modern years have "got there" through having the courage to work on this basis.

I have again and again heard people—after playing against famous combinations like the South Africans, the New Zealanders, and classical Welsh sides—remarking: "They fling the ball about all over the place; but wherever it goes,

there always seems somebody to take it on." This is probably not only an accurate description of what had happened, but indicates the reason why these teams have been so remarkably successful.

The players have confidence in each other, and consequently do not feel that they have to do everything on their own. In the ordinary course of events they never get off by themselves; not because they do not make individual efforts, but because the rest of the side are not going to take the risk of leaving even the most brilliant of these efforts unaided. Now, with the standard of play, or rather of backing-up, that some teams are still content with, it would be simply suicidal to chance a comrade realising where you want him to be. You require definite ocular demonstration that he is occupying that right position.

The result of having rigidly to adopt the "assume nothing" policy is the waste of many glorious openings; and not only that, but it inculcates the idea that a single-handed movement once begun must be persisted in single-handed to the bitter end. It assists the "easy descent" of individualism into selfishness. There is selfishness and selfishness. One form of it does not spring from evil propensity. It results rather from misguided keenness. It is the attempt to do too much for one's side at the wrong time, and the failure to realise that many manœuvres cannot be performed alone, but need the assistance of others if they are to succeed. Trust others and they will trust you is the secret of combination.

The man who can rely on supporters being

"there," at the right spot and at the right time, is able to do things that otherwise he would not dare to attempt. The secret of successful "backing-up" lies in quick starting; not only because of the extra amount of ground that can be covered, but because it keeps one's mind intent on what is going on. The quick starter will more probably pick the right position to get to. He will have a better opportunity of correcting an error in direction; and in these matters it is as frequently the slight as the big mistake that makes the difference.

There are comparatively few forwards who have carried the art of backing-up outsiders to a high pitch of perfection. One, however, that I knew had the most extraordinary knowledge of "locality." In defence as well as attack he seemed always to be about at the most opportune moments. His explanation of this very desirable faculty was that as soon as the scrum broke up he used to dash straight ahead on the side on which he had come out, when his own people had heeled; and straight for the opposite touch in goal flag when the opponents were in possession. More often than not he was dead wrong; but when he did come in, his services were invaluable. Many possibly will object to this practice, or rather to its general adoption by a pack. Be they right or be they wrong in this particular, the fact remains that it is men like the forward I have alluded to who have brought Rugby to the dignity of a science and an art. We need more players who use their heads and think things out for themselves.

The "Higher" Combination. It is one of the great attractions of the game that few hard and fast principles of play, applicable to all cases, can be laid down. Each special set of circumstances must be judged on its own merits or demerits. Many, one might almost say most, faults are attributable to negligence or carelessness. There are, however, instances where excess of zeal is the real reason of non-success.

While the art of combination does not entail the negation of individuality, people should not lose sight of the fact that many of the finest movements cannot be carried out single-handed. On the football field, one will often find oneself in a position where it is a question whether the right policy is to go on and try to do something oneself, or to prepare, and as far as possible to make smooth, the path and prospects of another.

Now, an appreciation of what I will call the "higher combination" will help very materially in coming to a decision. This higher combination, let me repeat, is based on the assumption that members of a side will back each other up, and that an individual player may rely on the others being more or less where they ought to be. Here are a few examples of how the policy of combined individualism can be worked.

Let us take the typical and simple case of a dribble. I need not dilate on the vagaries of a Rugger ball when it is rolling on the ground; but it is obvious that the chances of an effective dribble are greatly increased where more than one player is engaged in the attempt. If the ball be over-

run, it is useless for the over-runner to attempt to recover it himself, when there is somebody behind him to take on the movement. Should nobody be there, however, to support him, he will have to take great care not to lose control, and he can only do this by working at a reduced pace. Control is the important thing for him to consider; whereas, if supported, speed can be specially attended to. Our player, then—when accompanied—will only try to be the active agent as long as he can take the ball on at the maximum rapidity.

It often happens that if a bouncing ball can be prevented from going into touch a splendid opportunity presents itself of advancing matters by foot-work. To keep it in play men usually try to kick the ball towards the centre, and in their efforts to do this they frequently merely assist it over the touch-line. I would suggest that at times this is not the right thing to attempt. When, for instance, the ball is rolling awkwardly, or the player at the critical moment is wrongly balanced, the chances of his being able accurately to direct his foot pass may be very poor indeed. He may, however, be in a position to stop the ball dead ere it can go out of the play, but in all probability at the cost of putting himself temporarily out of the picture. He must hope that someone else can then be of use, and he has to trust that someone else will be there.

In both these instances it will be noticed that the player might possibly have done more himself; but finding the balance of probabilities inclining to the success of a combined manœuvre, he has

refrained from exerting his own powers to their fullest extent; and, assuming that he would be backed up, he has tried to subordinate—not to sacrifice—individualism to collective effort.

It may be very cogently suggested that mere assumptions must have a basis, and where the basis does not exist—that is, where men do not support each other—what is to be done? How is an improvement in this respect to be effected? If the other side are pretty certainly going to reap the harvest you have been sowing, then the fewer seeds you cast on the ground the better.

When the units of a fifteen have but a rudimentary appreciation of their interdependence, do not try it too high right away. Begin gradually and only work your assumption when failure is not likely to have dire results. Once people, however, have grasped the idea and, as the saying goes, “tasted blood” a few times, it is wonderful how quickly the good thing spreads. The more you expect from people, the more you will get out of them.

That combination cannot be achieved without persistent practice together is a platitude. At the same time we should not forget that it does not necessarily follow that the mere fact of men being members of the same team assures a state of affairs that ought to be honoured by such a complimentary term as “combination.” Too often people think that when they have been through a certain number of games in the same company they know all that need be known about the play of their various companions. This is not, or

certainly should not be, the case. However long a team remains unchanged, its members should never be satisfied with their knowledge of their mutual strength and weakness. True combination means not only the successful carrying out of different movements; it embraces also the development of individual potentialities. No team can be said to have attained it till they have hit the day when each separate player is at the top of his form. It is only when all are giving their personal best that the highest collective effort can be achieved. We do not realise this because we cannot get rid of the false notion that combination and individuality are contrary and opposing terms; in fact, they are complementary.

This being so, it follows that no man unaided can bring out all that is in him. It is, therefore, the duty of each unit in the fifteen to ensure the possibility of the best from all the others. It can only be done by continuous study, and by watching the methods of those others; so as not only to obviate and minimise the indifferent features of a particular man's play, but also to make the most of his good points, and to bring them prominently into the limelight. Not infrequently it happens that one pays more attention to a stranger's characteristics; and, for that very reason, a comparatively short experience may give one more information than a lengthy but thoughtless familiarity with a club-mate. It has also to be remembered that the most intimate acquaintance may not enable, say, two halves

ever properly to "hit it off." It is not always a question of ability; it has happened when both have been of first-class standard. For some mysterious reason, they may never fit in with each other as they do with different, even if comparatively unknown, partners. The determination to use one's brains and to overcome rather than simply to "gaze" on difficulties will, however, go far towards the prevention of such an unfortunate state of affairs.

Needless to say, I am not suggesting that a little rather than great experience is more likely to produce intimate knowledge. What I am trying to emphasise is that long association by itself is not sufficient; that it must be backed up by unremitting efforts towards progress and improvement.

On Setting the Pace. A weakness that even the best fifteens have continually to combat is the fatal practice of taking "breathers" while a game is in progress. The occasional "easy" is largely responsible for the heavy defeats so frequently administered to London teams in the provinces. Against a side that knows how to use its opportunities they develop the condition known in cricket as a "rot"; and when once that has set in there is every prospect of bad becoming worse. It is remarkable how many of the ills that football flesh is heir to can be obviated if not entirely avoided when people will let themselves go during the first minutes of the match. When this advice is taken collectively, by a team, there are very few instances of "cracking" from

physical exhaustion. The advantages of setting the pace at the start are incalculable. Nothing pulls a side together more quickly and enables them to take the game into their own hands. Nothing finds out the weak spots of the enemy so thoroughly, or so effectively prevents them settling down. Once the other side is demoralised, the victory is more than half won. If both teams go on to the field fully determined to set the pace, that contest will be worth watching. To prevent any confusion, it is perhaps as well to explain what precisely is meant by "setting the pace." The idea prevailing in some people's minds, when told to go hard, is apparently to rush about like wild bulls, blindly kicking, scrambling, ramping, fighting, and generally wearing themselves out. It is hardly necessary to say that such proceedings are the reverse of useful.

In a sense, it is true that to go hard one ought to go mad; but in that madness there must be a very great deal of method. The prowess of Cromwell's Ironsides is renowned in history. Their charges truly were examples of "madness with method." The secret of their success lay in the fact that in the battle they never got out of discipline. They never pursued a routed enemy, or stopped to slay when other things had to be done. In football parlance, they always played as a team. They shoved their weight in the scrum, but broke up quickly when the ball was out; and did not waste their time and energies in "scragging" opponents who had not got the ball.

To set the pace, a side must do everything a

little bit better than usual. They must not wait to see what is the quality of the opposition they have to meet; there is plenty of time to discover that later on. Let the enemy have an uncomfortable experience of their calibre ere they are expecting it. It can never be known how much damage the sudden shock may inflict on their *moral*. A try in the last minute adds three points to the total; a score in the first minute will possibly be worth a good many more. To "Wait and see" is not sound strategy in football. Wales are so formidable in Wales, very largely because they understand the art of beginning with the whistle. Against an English or Scottish team they are quite likely to be a couple of scores ahead before their opponents fully realise that the game has started. I once had the misfortune to be playing at Cardiff when this actually happened. In what has been said it must not be imagined that I am advocating the taking of undue risks in the early stages of every game. There is nothing inherently excellent in risky play *per se*. It is more often a sign of unintelligence or thoughtlessness than of considered boldness. To put the negative aspect of setting the pace—it means the elimination of a preliminary warming-up process. It is not directly concerned with the advisability or otherwise of any special form of tactics.

Defensive Strategy. Though we should play to win, rather than to avert defeat, I again repeat that it is utterly fallacious in any way to sacrifice defence to attack—and what is more, it is absolutely unnecessary. What has been said about

position applies as forcibly to keeping the other side out as it does to scoring tries; and experience teaches us that we shall be more successful in our efforts if we systematise our defence, and do not leave it to individual initiative and to haphazard chance.

When two halves and four three-quarters are meeting the attack of a similar number of opponents there are alternative methods of disposing their forces. Either the two defending halves will take the attacking scrum-worker, the first three-quarter making himself responsible for the flying half, the next "three" for the first of the enemy's third line, and so on: with the result that, if the passing movement goes on without mishap the attackers will have a man overlapping who will only have the back to meet.

The other way is for each defender to take his *vis-à-vis*—i.e. the scrum half the other scrum half; the flying half the flying half; the first three the first three, etc., etc. When this latter scheme can properly be carried out, it is obviously preferable, as there can be no question of overlapping. The whole point is: which is safer?

We must remember that under the *vis-à-vis* system the first defending half, in order to get at his opponent, has to go round one side of the scrum, thereby leaving the other side open, and possibly giving the enemy a chance of getting through at a particularly dangerous point.

This last consideration may have an appreciable effect on the flying half. He will feel that he must keep "half an eye" on the look-out for such a

contingency, and so will not be able to concentrate all his attention on his own particular business. In his anxiety he is quite likely to fall between two stools; or, in other words, to get into such a position that he cannot be certain of accounting for the scrum half, if he does attempt to go through; or for his own man, who will have been allowed to get just out of reach. Similar difficulties may have an influence on three-quarters also.

We see, then, that the disadvantages of the latter plan are that the scrum half may not be able to cope with his man and that the other defenders may frequently be in doubt as to which opponent they ought to lay low. The other method has this great advantage: that every one knows exactly whom he is responsible for tackling.

For many years I was strongly in favour of the "coming-in" policy, but I have now come to the conclusion that against the best attacks the *vis-à-vis* system must be adopted. Great offensive skill causes the overlapping to be too dangerous. There is a further reason. In former days, when ideas of defence had pride of place; when we had not realised so thoroughly the possibilities of turning defence into attack, the area of attacking movements was of much smaller dimensions. When a side was not out definitely to attack, the outsiders only thought of themselves as defenders pure and simple; and came up as near their opponents as the rules would permit. They had then to cover a shorter distance to get to their men. It was comparatively rare to see both teams simultaneously drawn up—or rather drawn back—to

deliver an attack. If one side decided to do so, the other felt it was their duty to defend. Very often both were more or less on the defensive. Nowadays these conditions have changed, and it is of frequent occurrence for both fifteens to be on the scoring "tack." The consequence is that the respective outside divisions are often too far away from each other to make a certainty of "bottling" the opponent; and to get on the man just as the ball is coming to him is the secret of success in the "coming-in" plan.

For moderate or inexperienced performers I am not at all sure, however, that the certainty of knowing exactly what to do is not the most important point; and I am inclined to think that in junior team football there will be less tendency to scrambling and half-hearted play if the two halves "bottle" the man at the base of the scrum.

Many teams have obviated the uncertainty of *vis-à-vis* marking by playing a "winger" in the scrum. His duty in defence is to account for—in conjunction with his own scrum half—the opposing scrum half. This simplifies the defensive problem very considerably.

On defence generally, apart from its special branches, there are one or two points that make a great difference—when opportunely remembered. It may be very difficult to stop a movement that has got properly going; but greater preliminary attention would very possibly have prevented its successful initiation. It is the work before an opening is made that tells, and if an "Irishism"

be permitted, the best way to stop an attack is never to let it begin.

Backing-up is even more vital in defence than in attack. Don't leave all the work to others; and more especially if you have missed a man—we have all done it on occasions—don't waste a single moment wondering how such a catastrophe could have happened. Set off to remedy your error at once.

Nothing is more annoying than just as you are tackling a man to find yourself hurled off your object by the impact of a comrade's body bent on achieving the same purpose—nothing incidentally is more likely to cause accidents. A little thinking by the man coming across will in most cases, however, prevent the occurrence of these unfortunate contretemps. Let him take the very greatest care not to hamper the efforts of another of his own side. Outsides, like forwards breaking from the scrum, when going over to help on the other side of the field should make for the opposite touch-in goal flag. It is the most convenient objective where no other has immediately to be made for. Never forget to *start* at full speed when going across. You can always slow down later, if not wanted. You may have been badly wanted, but just not there, if you delay putting on the pace till you see exactly what is required from you.

Some Principles of Attack. In order to develop a successful attack we have noted that people must be very careful that they are disposed in the right formation. The movements otherwise will lack sting and definiteness. In junior team play

more especially, it has struck me that there often is a tendency to overdo kicking. Perhaps it would be better to say to attempt to find touch at the wrong moments. Occasions are chosen when the prospects of making a dangerous opening are all favourable. Why is this? One reason, I think, is due to players being wrongly situated for taking a pass. When outsides are simply spread across the field there is much greater prospect of an enemy being more or less on top of the man who is about to take the ball. He will feel that he is "bottled"; and that the best thing to do is to attempt to gain some yards by kicking, instead of merely being held, where he is in possession.

Often, too, in order to catch the ball at all, a three-quarter, where not properly back, will find that he has to turn in a direction nearer at right angles to the touch-line than to the 'opposition's goal-line.

The necessity of *being right back* is a "bed-rock" principle and one of the conditions precedent to a high standard of play.

Another very prevalent fault is standing too far away to the side of the neighbouring player. You cannot transfer the ball quickly to somebody else unless he is within easy reach. The essence of the four three-quarter system is that the passes should be sharp and straight. To give a long pass the passer is bound to steady himself, and to do this he has to slow down just at the wrong moment.

Where outsides are far away from each other there is usually a pronounced tendency to run

across—a proceeding which not only gains no ground, but tires out the forwards in the most unnecessary fashion.

I am now going to talk in what is generally called Irish, and suggest that in football there are dozens of points each of which, if thoroughly realised and “gripped,” will make for more than half the victory. As they should all be brought into play every time, and as every two of them are rather more than the equivalent of one victory, a dozen of them, let us say, should involve some six victories. This, according to our old friend Euclid, is absurd; and the laws of Rugby agree with him, as they only allow one try to be scored at a time.

To translate this “Irish,” however, is not difficult. More than one string is, if not absolutely necessary, at anyrate very useful for a blow, and in the same way where one thing by itself is not sufficient to carry a matter through, the presence of additional factors may give a support strong enough to make the difference between success and failure.

Now, straight running is one of these “more than half the victory” points. Players should never have it out of their minds. In the ordinary course of events any deviation to the “crooked path” will tend towards failure; and every means must be taken to right any inclination in that direction. How often does one see quite a nice bout of passing which, from its inception, one realises can be of no avail because its movement is from touch-line to touch-line, instead

of towards that part of the field where tries are scored !

How to bring back to "straight ahead" a movement that has too much bias towards the touch-line is a difficult question to answer. It can be done, however, if people realise what is happening sufficiently quickly.

The first method that suggests itself is for one of the players who would eventually get a pass when he cannot do any good with the ball to cut in either right across or just behind the man in possession, and to take the ball practically from his hands. There will be a very reasonable chance of his being able to dash through the nearest opponents as the defending side will be coming across, and he will meet them at an angle. Even if he be tackled, in all probability not much harm will have been done. It will simply mean that the forwards will not have so far to run to get into the next scrum. (This special means of attack is capable of wider application, as I shall endeavour to show in the chapter on Half-Back Play.)

Method number two is to pass the ball as quickly as possible along the line to the wing man, in the hope that he will get it before all the opposition are concentrated on him. He will then have time at anyrate to see what can be done, instead of receiving simultaneously with the ball the attentions of one or two of the enemy. If he can kick across so that the ball will drop behind the defending three-quarter line, his forwards may have a glorious opportunity. Don't let him forget that

he must then run straight up the field, to put his own team on-side, and must not attempt to run directly for the ball himself. It is remarkable how even experienced players, in the excitement of the moment, forget this very simple and definite instruction. There are other alternatives that our wing may adopt; for instance, kicking into touch or passing in again, either at once or when he has run round an opponent.

There is often a risk about passing immediately one gets the ball, because the man who has to take the transfer may not be expecting it at the moment.

This is really a most feeble excuse for missing a pass. It means that the would-be receiver was not on the *qui vive*, as he ought always to be. The onus is certainly not on the man with the ball to see that his neighbour is ready to meet any ordinary contingency. He—*i.e.* the man with the ball—has quite enough employment in deciding what tactics can most advantageously be pursued. Whatever he may think of their wisdom or futility, it is the duty of the next player to be ready to co-operate with his comrade.

A wing especially should always be on the lookout for a pass that is apparently too soon. The centre may have noticed that there is very little chance of his outside man being able to get right through unaided; and that if he himself delays his pass till the ordinarily correct moment he will be tackled and put out of further action in that special movement.

To punt towards either wing, or straight up the field and make a dash for it, often are very effective

in correcting "crookedness." Stoop is wonderfully clever in seizing the moments for these kinds of kicks. He scored a brilliant if slightly lucky try a few seasons back against the Old Merchant Taylors. We had forced the Harlequin attack to continue at a slant across the field when Stoop, coming in for a second time into the movement, kicked over our line. The try he gained was lucky in the sense that it could not have happened unless the ball had bounced perfectly for him; but the effort was a rare example of the way a resourceful player can make capital out of apparently an unfavourable situation.

There are quite a large number of men who do excellently up to a certain point, and who perform all that can be expected from them, provided that the responsibility for the finishing touches does not remain on their shoulders. They appear, however, to lose their heads when they get clear away, and to have no initiative unless there is hope of support from some quarter.

This is often the case among men who are not endowed by nature with a fine turn of speed. They are too conscious of their lack of pace, and they feel that it will not be a difficult task for the opposition to overtake them. The very fact of their thinking about it seems to prevent their bringing out the full capacity that is in them.

Pace on the Rugby field is, of course, a tremendous asset. I do say, however, that there is no need for the non-speedy player to be discouraged. He will naturally have a greater

number of difficulties to surmount, but he must realise that very few of them are insurmountable if only he will have the courage to trust his running for all it is worth.

The man who overestimates his powers in such matters is far more likely to achieve what looked like the impossible than he who has but a modest appreciation of his own prowess. In football, it is essential to have confidence in oneself. It rarely leads to anything but good results. Where it generally comes to grief is when it is allied with mistrust of others. It will then tend to selfish play and is absolutely subversive of all ideas of combination.

It is hardly necessary to add that there is all the difference in the world between having confidence in one's own capacity and being conceited about what one can do. The two things are as far apart as first-class and stump cricket.

Assuming that what has just been written will imbue our player who is clear away with the necessary confidence, what courses are open to him? He can go on his own and try to swerve or run round the back; he can kick or, provided it does not cause him to run parallel to the goal-line, he can make for that part of the field where support is likely to be forthcoming. One thing he must not do, and that is to slow down to think out his plan of campaign. He must be going as hard as he knows all the time, and the more quickly he is able to decide what is to happen the more likely he is to be successful.

For some reason or another I always think it

is a most difficult thing when one has some distance to travel, when the only obstacle between oneself and a try is the opposing back, and when another of one's side is in attendance, to run one's fastest *right up* to the opponent and to deliver a pass at full speed. There always seems to be a great temptation, in taking care that the pass shall be a very easy one to accept, to steady down ere parting with the ball.

Unfortunately these are always the occasions that the backer-up chooses for particular orthodox play, and the slightest delay usually means that he overruns the man in possession. It will be well for the would-be taker of the pass to remember this temptation, and adjust his position accordingly. It is generally easier to gather the ball even from the ground when it is in front than to catch an otherwise good transfer that is the least bit behind one.

On the subject of taking passes, I believe it would do a lot of good if a wing three-quarter—it applies, of course, to others—refused even to think he had cause for complaint if the ball, however badly passed, comes in front of him. Let him make up his mind that, whether it be at his feet or right above his head, it is his own fault when he does not “freeze” on to it. I am certain that he will then negotiate a much larger number of preposterous efforts than could reasonably or unreasonably be expected of him.

Let him be quite sure, at any rate, that there is no contributory negligence on his part—for instance, if he snap at a pass that he has to turn

round for—before he ventures even mentally to censure the failings of another. The attitude of mind is very important. It does not matter from the point of view of the side whose fault it was that the score was not obtained; it does matter very considerably if somebody did not exert himself to the uttermost to mitigate the costliness of an error.

It is human nature to feel more charitably towards the beam in one's own eye than towards the mote in another's. There are generally a large number of reasons—some possibly quite sound—by which the presence of the beam can be explained; the excuses for the mote are usually very unconvincing. The sentiment, "Oh! it's the other fellow's fault and I can't possibly be expected to cover *all* his mistakes," may or may not be correct in any given instance. But it is a very dangerous feeling to be encouraged.

The backer-up should remember very carefully also the caution about not being too far away. Instinctively he will tend to edge off from the only danger that threatens and, in this case, instinct is not altogether to be relied on. It sounds a little strange, but the nearer you can pass an opponent, consistently, of course, with safety—that is, being out of his reach—the more definitely have you placed him out of action. When meeting a steam-roller on a horse that pays attention to such objects it is well to ride right up to it. The animal certainly will not shy towards what it is frightened of, and when it is on the farther side of the road, near a ditch or pavement, the con-

sequence of any display of nerves is likely to be most unpleasant.

To apply this to the point under discussion, there is obviously only one direction for the backer-up to move in should things go unfavourably. It is therefore good to have as much space as possible on that side open to him.

A defending player also has to deal very differently with a man who is going by him at a comparative distance and one close at hand. If the attacker is only just out of reach, the one chance of capturing him is to turn right round and try to get him from behind. The turning round must obviously take a fraction of time. Furthermore, the whole balance of the body has to be altered ere a plunge after the runner can be made. The latter, on the other hand, if things have gone properly, will be right in his stride and at full speed.

Where the would-be scorer is farther off the pass he has to gather is a longer one and, *ipso facto*, more difficult. There may be quite an appreciable difference between a long and short pass; not only in the way it flies, but often in the time it takes in transit. This may seem rather an insignificant detail, but it is just the kind of thing that at the critical moment is a deciding factor. We are dealing after all with "finishing touches," about which it is impossible to be too careful. The opponent, furthermore, has a greater prospect of collaring his man, in that, unless the scene of operations is right on the goal-line, he need not go straight for him, but can endeavour to cut him

off. Much more ground can be covered obliquely, and the defender is not handicapped so much in starting, as he has only to make a half-turn to get off the mark.

We will now go back a stage, and consider when the original possessor of the ball, who, with a comrade in attendance, is bearing down (at full speed, it is to be hoped) on a solitary enemy, should and should not pass. It will depend almost entirely on the position of that enemy. If he is tending to edge between the two it will in a great number of cases pay the player to feint and to go through on his own. Even if tackled, there will usually be a chance of getting rid of the ball somehow to the other man.

Another case where few people ever think of feinting, though it is often the safer course, is when the defender is coming across at an angle and is able to take his opponents one after the other. It is then frequently impossible to "draw" him off the man who would receive the pass, but a feint may induce him to go for the wrong person.

Under ordinary circumstances it is usually better to pass, but ere this happens the passer should see to it that the adversary is induced to tackle or, at anyrate, to go in for himself. I had the exquisite satisfaction a few years ago of bluffing Poulton Palmer out of not taking this preliminary precaution. He was away with those horribly speedy people, Johnny Birkett and Lambert, on his left, and I was unsupported. The inspiration came to feint myself. I took a step in his direction and waved my arms and head. Then, taking

my courage in both hands and a spring from the ground, I landed on top of his next-door neighbour, Birkett. "Johnnie" had no cause to grumble, as the ball had arrived simultaneously with myself. I shall not quickly forget the thrill I felt in discovering this fact. It was one of those glorious "ifs" that so rarely come off. I mention the incident merely to emphasise the hint about drawing the defence ere passing. My action must *not* be taken as a suggestion of what ought to be done.

To swerve away as you pass is sometimes a useful tip to remember in attack. It is a means of correcting any running across tendency, as it helps to bring the taker of the pass back into the straight. It has the further merit occasionally of stopping the defence from concentrating too rapidly on your attacking wing by inducing somebody to stop to see whether it is necessary to devote any more attention to the swerver. This is another little manœuvre that Stoop does admirably.

There are various devices of a similar character that are worth considering. About most of them there is nothing inherently cunning, but they often serve a purpose by reason of their unexpectedness.

When an outside receives the ball in loose scrambling play, when there are opponents right on him, and no one of his own side who can be fed to advantage, what, for want of a better term, may be called the "dropped shoulder" break-through can be brought into use. The player

feints to pass and at the same time pretends to stumble. He should turn sideways to the man who could tackle him, so that his shoulder drops under the other man's arm; the head follows under the arm quite quietly, and then—if the feet can be managed properly so that the pretence of stumbling does not become a reality—the trick is accomplished.

Lloyd, the old Newport and Welsh half, had a wonderful knack of beating the defence in this fashion, while Pat Munro's "tumble" was proverbial among those who were well acquainted with his play. He was always most dangerous when apparently slipping, and when one had seen him at this little game once or twice in a match one always knew that the other side had better look out for trouble. I have seen him get through near the scrum when it seemed quite impossible that he could avoid falling over. How he did it I never quite could tell. I am not at all sure that half the secret was not his amusingly resigned demeanour when apparently off his balance. One might almost have imagined that he was saying: "Ah, well, it's bad luck I slipped; I fear it's all over for the moment." Frequently it was "all over"—for the opposition.

The unexpected, when properly carried out, is always dangerous. Even a poor manœuvre intrinsically may be of the utmost value by reason of the unpreparedness of the other side. But it has to be remembered that it is the unexpectedness that is the prime factor in the event of success. It follows, therefore, that a



D. LAMBERT, THE HARLEQUIN FLYER, SWERVING
AN OPPONENT



A. D. STOOP PASSING TO F. M. STOOP

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good trick is one that should be used and not abused ; in other words, that it must not be subjected to the familiarity that breeds a knowledge of how to counteract its purpose.

No advice, I think, is better to the would-be enterprising footballer than to learn as many tricks—fair ones only, of course—as possible, but not to expose any particular item of his learning to the vulgar gaze, except when necessary. Let him keep it for times when he is being beaten in, or for clinching, an argument. Other things being equal, ring the changes on ordinary methods ; it will be more paying in the long run. Those beautiful old Worcester cups and saucers look charming in the drawing-room cabinet. Do not take tea out of them every afternoon. They are made of “soft” paste, and they will not stand the strain of continual washing and cleaning so well as those more durable, if not such delightful, equivalents of more recent origin.

In some games it is not permissible, but in Rugby it is advisable to keep tricks “up your sleeve.”

Do not forget my caution. If the opposition have an inkling of what is going to happen they will be a poor lot indeed if they allow the “addition from the sleeve” successfully to be brought into play.

I remember batting against a left-hand bowler a few years ago. His stock ball was one that broke away, but he could also send down a “swinger” that came right into the batsman. I received a particularly good specimen of the

latter in the second over I had from him and, not being on the look-out for anything of the sort, it was very nearly fatal. After that he kept on sending down one or two an over, with the result that I soon got to know when they were coming, and scored freely off him while he remained on.

This little episode is a good example of bad strategy. The "swinger" was an excellent ball for that bowler to have in his bag, but it was a great mistake on his part to make such frequent use of it. He would have done much better only to have "served it up" once in, say, every three overs.

It is the same in football. To take risks and liberties or to adopt unorthodox methods when the circumstances demand is eminently desirable; to do these things unnecessarily, especially in a tight game, deserves the punishment that the fates usually mete out to such offences. It is bad play to trump with the ace where a smaller card would suffice.

"Read the rules!" Of all the hundreds of people who play Rugger every Saturday throughout the season, I wonder how many there are who read the rules through carefully even once a year? From the remarks and ejaculations of spectators, it is quite obvious that the little handbook which is issued annually by the Rugby Union is not a widely circulated publication. It is a pity, because an intimate knowledge of the rules is absolutely essential to excellence in play. Lookers-on also would find their interest greatly stimulated and would not so often feel inclined to

resent what, for want of knowing better, they erroneously consider to be mistakes on the referee's part.

Of recent years the rules have been annotated by extracts from the latest circular letter of the International Rugby Football Board. This body, which consists of representatives from the English, Welsh, Scotch and Irish Unions, publishes letters, at odd intervals, with the object of assisting referees upon various points of law and of securing uniformity of rulings.

To show how little appreciated are many of the laws, one has only to hear the remarks in a crowd when the referee delays blowing his whistle in the case of an obvious knock-on or throw-forward. Invariably someone will accuse him of slowness, of slackness, of inattention, or of unfairness—and very probably of all these failings combined—in that he did not whistle the second the infringement happened. Yet, by Rule 3, Sec. g, he is *only* to blow his whistle “when he notices any irregularity of play *whereby the side committing such gain an advantage.*” It would not, perhaps, matter so very much if the spectators alone were ignorant on this point, but one notices also that players are infected with the same ignorance. I have frequently seen men stop because they thought the whistle was bound to be blown; whereas if they had gone on they would have been able to do something of great value to their side; something which the law was drafted for the express purpose of enabling them to do.

What is “off-side”? Rule 7 states that a

player is off-side if he enters a scrummage from his opponents' side, or if the ball is being run with, or has been kicked or touched by one of his own side behind him. What an off-side player must *not* do is stated in Rule 8. He shall not "play the ball, nor actively or passively obstruct an opponent, or approach or wilfully remain within ten yards of any opponent waiting for the ball."

In the International Board note, which is appended, on this point (and which it should be observed has all the binding force of an actual law) referees are instructed to enforce penalties for breaches more strictly than they have been in the habit of doing.

"A referee must," it is laid down, "award a free kick if he thinks a fair catch would have been made had not an off-side player, through his proximity and not retiring beyond the ten yards limit, have rendered such catch more difficult. For instance, a player waiting to receive the ball fails to catch it properly, and it drops from his hands to the ground. An opponent who is off-side and who is standing or has approached within ten yards of him immediately pounces upon him and prevents him recovering and playing the ball. A free-kick should be awarded, as it was the duty of the off-side player to have retired beyond the ten yards limit." I quote the greater portion of this note because, from personal experience, I appreciate how difficult it is cleanly to catch a high kick when one feels that opponents are illegally standing close at hand ready to spring at the slightest provocation.

The aggressors on these occasions usually feel themselves very badly treated when their side is penalised for their conduct. "I was doing nothing. I was simply standing still," you will frequently hear a "victim" ejaculate with honest, if mistaken, indignation. "Yes," one might reply, "that was your offence. If you had read the rule you would have known that there was a positive duty imposed on all off-side players to retire beyond the ten yards limit."

The ignorance of the rules displayed by people who ought to know better is lamentable. Much of the prevalent uncertainty would be cleared up by even half-an-hour's serious reading of the Rugby Union's little handbook. It surely is not too great a demand on our devotees to ask them to spend at least this amount of time every season in getting acquainted with the ordinances that have been framed for their benefit. A half-hour thus spent would be most profitably employed. There would be more playing right up to the whistle which, in itself, would improve the standard of performance—and, what is more, much of that not so much vicious as silly "yapping" would disappear from the football field.

CHAPTER V

TACTICS IN DETAIL

TACKLING, PASSING, KICKING AND OTHER MATTERS

WE now come to a more particular examination of the various branches of play.

Tackling. The first thing a boy is taught about Rugby is that he must tackle. The precept is continually dinned into him during the whole of his football career. If he is a good boy, and keen, he will always go on the field with the firm determination to collar. Assuming he is not a funk, and does not have very unpleasant experiences to begin with, he will probably get more or less into the way of accounting for his man with fair regularity. If he has natural aptitude, he may become that great asset to a side—a dead tackler.

But I would not mind undertaking to say that the majority even of this last class would have great difficulty in answering the question: "How do you do it?" After the proverbial head-scratch, the reply would probably be: "Well, I don't quite know. I just get him, and he goes." "I go low, of course," perhaps will be added, and

possibly an offer to show you how it's done. If you are wise, however, you will decline the demonstration, unless it is to be performed on a very special enemy. You will prefer to see it take place during a game. Tackling in cold blood is a horrible and risky barbarism, as I know to my own cost. Now, practically nothing has been gained from the answer as it stands. You knew beforehand that the man certainly "went" when our tackler "got" him. You realised also that he had been taken low. But if you unfortunately happen to be a feeble defender, you know that when you get your man he does not "go," however near the earth you have attempted to take him.

Still, let us analyse the explanation. Two points stand out: (1) The intending collarer must get his man; (2) must get him low. As regards the first, when is a man "got"? Can you be said to have got him when the moving weight of some part of your body comes in contact with a portion of his anatomy? Is the first impact, so to speak, the deciding factor that brings him over? I submit that it is not: that you have *not* tackled your object, in the true sense of the term, till you have gripped him so that he cannot get away from you. You put him off his balance, it is true, by the first impact, but till you grip there is the possibility that he may recover it.

To tackle a man, then, two steps are necessary; and I am convinced that it is because people do not realise that the second step is as important as the first that indifferent collaring is so prevalent. To very few of us is it given to be a "born"

tackler. The gods bestow this gift very grudgingly, and the reason is not far to seek.

The correct method of collaring is an extremely artificial proceeding. One's natural impulse when one desires to put a man down at football is to catch hold of him high up by the shoulders or head, and by wrestling with him, and, by exerting as much force as one is capable of, to hurl him over so that he falls, while you yourself are left standing. The inclination is neither to go low nor to fall with the man if it can possibly be avoided. The way I imagine an untutored savage would set about the business would be first to hurl his opponent to the ground, then to pounce on him, and then to—well, we need not enter into further details.

I do not say that hurling is never successful. There is undoubtedly a fierce if not altogether noble satisfaction in flinging another human being away from you as if he were a piece of dirt. If you do it properly he is very likely to be hurt, and assuredly to be very angry. Quite apart from the question of ethics or true football spirit, have you done what your side really required? Unless he be stunned or really seriously injured (which, let us hope, you would deplore), he has not been put out of the movement. He may still get up and kick or pass. The object of collaring is to stop the advance by tackling the man and capturing the ball with him. Now, hurling very rarely accomplishes this object. To tackle a man, you have got to go with him, or rather to go yourself first and make him come after you. This

sounds unpleasant. It is not really. I do not mean that you must necessarily be underneath every time; but that as you grip you should let yourself go, and bring the man over rather by the dead weight of your body than by the exertion of strenuous arm and shoulder work.

Now in order to go first, the would-be collarer should be off his own balance even before the first impact. Then, however small the defender may be, and however great the size of his opponent, provided that a bull-dog grip has been fastened on the latter, there can be no getting away—under a very appreciable amount of time, at anyrate. Hercules himself would be more than considerably hampered by another body clinging, say, to a leg. The dead weight, however, only comes in when the tackler is ready to go to earth himself. Provided you are prepared to fall with your man, the capture of a very small piece of him involves the certainty of the rest of his anatomy following the piece. Dame Nature has not fashioned man so that he comes, literally, to fragments. When “selecting” your piece (preferably just above the knee) it is no good shutting your eyes and rushing blindly at it, or holding out your arms in the hope that it will fall into them. It is most unpleasant as a rule when such hopes are justified by a result—you usually get hurt. Aimlessness and half-heartedness in tackling are two of the worst faults in the game, and are accountable for a very large proportion of accidents. These very rarely follow from keen and correct tackling. It is when a man does not put all that he knows into his work that

injuries may be expected. The muscles are not tense, the body is not braced to stand the strain, and there is consequently little resisting power with which to meet the impact. As suggested, the grip must be of the bull-dog breed; as soon as you feel something encircled by your arms, clutch it, and don't momentarily relax your grip with the mistaken idea of putting extra pressure on that will cause the body to topple over more heavily. That is how dozens and dozens of tackles have been missed; there will be quite sufficient grass-finding impetus if you have the grip and begin the falling yourself. In "sighting the bit" (don't forget to use your eyes), it is usually wrong to try to obtain the first impact with your hands; that should come from a shoulder—and then you "embrace" whatever the arms enfold. In practice it will be found that the more closely coincident the first impact and the grip are made, the more surely and the more decidedly is the man brought down.

I was talking a little while back with a friend of mine who rarely lets his man past him. We were discussing the causes of missed tackles; and he was saying that when he missed he nearly always found it was because he had aimed at the man instead of through him. This sounded very alarming, and I expressed my pleasure that I had not often played against him. Needless to say, there was nothing diabolically blood-thirsty about his conduct when the explanation came.

When you dive for a man—*i.e.* jump off your own balance before your body meets his—you

must — unconsciously at anyrate — aim to fall somewhere. Now, the majority of dives, as my friend pointed out, have only sufficient impetus barely to reach the man. If the latter can make even a slight deviation, so that if he can move away from them just while the diver is “on the way,” he will elude his would-be capturer, who cannot increase the distance of his jump while in the air. What ought to be done is to aim to alight, if nothing were met *en route*, a yard or so on the opposite side (to you) of your object.

One is told the same thing in long jumping—if, for instance, a ditch of sixteen feet has to be cleared, it is well to attempt to jump at least eighteen or nineteen feet to make certain of the lesser distance. The more I have thought of this hint, the more I am convinced of its soundness; and it explains and clears up the mystery of numerous errors in defence committed in historic games and by notable defenders.

There is an exception, for an outside at anyrate, to the rigid precept “go low,” in what may be called the smother tackle. This ought only to be attempted when the tackler is in such a position that he can arrive on his opponent at the same moment as the ball. The object in this case is not so much to secure the man as the ball.

One other point about tackling—there must be no preliminary thinking about it. “He who hesitates is lost” is very apposite to defence in general. Everybody physically fit can attain to a certain degree of proficiency in fielding at cricket.

It is the same in collaring. It is a pity that everybody does not realise this possibility.

Falling and Saving. Not so many years ago anyone who did not go down immediately to a rush was regarded as a coward, pure and simple. The prospects of picking the ball off forwards' feet or of starting an effective counter-attack were regarded as far too slender to be worth thinking of. Any attempts were sternly discouraged. In fact, it was regarded as a convention, almost as strong as that against passing in one's own twenty-five, that the *only* thing to be done was to stay the enemy's progress by securing the ball on the ground, and by lying with it—where one could not struggle on—at their feet, till support in the shape of one's own forwards had time to arrive. Referees did not insist so emphatically as at the present day on the defender immediately getting off the ball when tackled.

Saving is not really such a very terrible ordeal—if one point be remembered. Don't try to fall on the ball, but in front of it, with your back to the foe—*i.e.* between the ball and the on-coming feet. To protect a football with your body sounds heroic and noble. As a matter of fact, it is the only safe method. Accidents happen when you fall on the ball. A comparatively trivial error in direction by a not necessarily wickedly minded boot may then quite easily involve you in a fractured rib or concussion of the brain. What is foolish is to try to save with your head foremost. Your back is the thing to present to the enemy; and you should aim to fall so that he or they will tumble

over your prostrate body in any event. The greatest care, of course, must be taken that you gather the ball behind you as you fall; but even if you don't do this you will have averted the most pressing danger by the fact that the nearest opponent will be on the ground. Now if you fall *on* the ball, apart from being exactly at that distance from the foe where you may receive the full force of a kick, you do not throw him right off his balance. When you drop in front, however, you come in contact with the lower part of his leg, just above the ankle; and not being able to check himself, he is bound to topple over your body.

Wherever possible, always try to fall at an angle to the other man's direction. It is much safer in every way, and there is always a chance that your dive will carry—or rather roll—you right across his path. Then, should the ball have been gathered on the way, you may be clear of impediment and be able to get up and kick, or pass, or even to go off on your own.

In this branch of defence never forget the admonition to use your eyes. If you don't, it is a matter of chance whether you secure the ball or not, and you will never be able to pick off opponents' feet with any certainty. It is impossible to generalise as to when a man should be content simply to save, and when he ought to try to turn defence into attack. It depends on the position and on the state of the game. It will be better for young players, when in doubt, not to be too ambitious; and certainly not to try to be

“offensive” themselves when they have no comrades to back them up; or when failure to stay the rush is likely to cause grave disaster to their side. Ability to take in the probabilities and the possibilities of the situation will never come without the use of intelligence as well as experience.

There is too great a tendency nowadays to fly to the risk-taking extreme and to avoid falling entirely. It is not sufficiently appreciated that where combination exists there is almost as good a chance of delivering a counter-attack after—or while—going down to the ball. What was wrong with the old practice was not that falling was regularly insisted on, but that when once on the ground, there a man was expected to remain, and fight on till a scrum had been formed around him.

I should like to see a compromise adopted between the extreme old and new ideas: where falling is the regular habit, but where the saver is ever ready to snap at any feasible opportunity that may be going.

Passing. A good bout of passing in “Rugger” is not such a simple process as the uninitiated spectator might suppose. To transfer the ball from one to another, when going at full speed, is not merely a mechanical proceeding, but requires the exercise of many faculties for its successful performance. But though there are many things which must be remembered, most of the difficulties will disappear if players will only form up right behind each other, and not across the field. I

would point out to my particular friend, the unlearned but not unintelligent player, that he will find a most wonderful vista of possibilities opening out before him by the exceedingly simple expedient of standing, shall we say, three or four yards farther behind his neighbour than has been his usual practice. Let him in no way be alarmed, if this involves his total backwardness (from the next man) of even seven to eight yards. The farther he is behind, the more quickly must he be prepared to start, and quick starting is getting on for half-way home. He will then appreciate the real joys of taking a pass; and the pace he can be going at when the ball is caught right in front of him will probably be a revelation. He will discover also that many times he is clean through when by his old methods nothing of any advantage could possibly have happened. If anyone thinks I am exaggerating the results of such a comparatively small alteration in "stance," just let him try the experiment. If it doesn't come off at once, let him keep on trying. He will not be sorry in the end. By the very fact that he will have had previously to advise his neighbour of what he is going to do, he will automatically have helped to improve the combination all round. To talk in what unfortunately does not seem to be regarded as the A B C of football instruction, it is useless to pass the ball to a fellow-player who is, or is likely to be when it reaches him, in a worse position for continuing the movement than the passer. Needless to say, this does not mean that a pass should only be given when the would-be

receiver is likely to have a clear run-in; but it does mean that the passer usually should attempt to make an opening ere getting rid of the ball. It imposes a corresponding duty on the receiver to do all he can to make the opening effective.

Speaking broadly, an opening involves the drawing of some portion of the defence into such a position that the attacker in possession can either go through himself, or feed another of his side, who is more advantageously placed, through defenders having been induced to anticipate a different danger-point.

A common example is where A (let us say a centre three-quarter), ere passing to B (his wing), forces B's *vis-à-vis* to come for him (A), thereby leaving B with a clear field when he does get the ball.

Where many people come to grief in making an opening is when they see the chance of slipping through the line of defence. They too often think that there are then only alternative courses of action open to them: either to pass at once or to go right through as far as they can. They seldom seem to realise that there is a third possibility, which frequently offers the best prospect.

Immediately the defending line has been broken may quite easily be the psychological moment for passing. Going on half-a-dozen yards or so, even when unimpeded, may just allow the defence to concentrate. Now when a defending line has been pierced, the advantage is all with the attacking side. Certain of the defenders must have been put temporarily out of action; they have to turn,

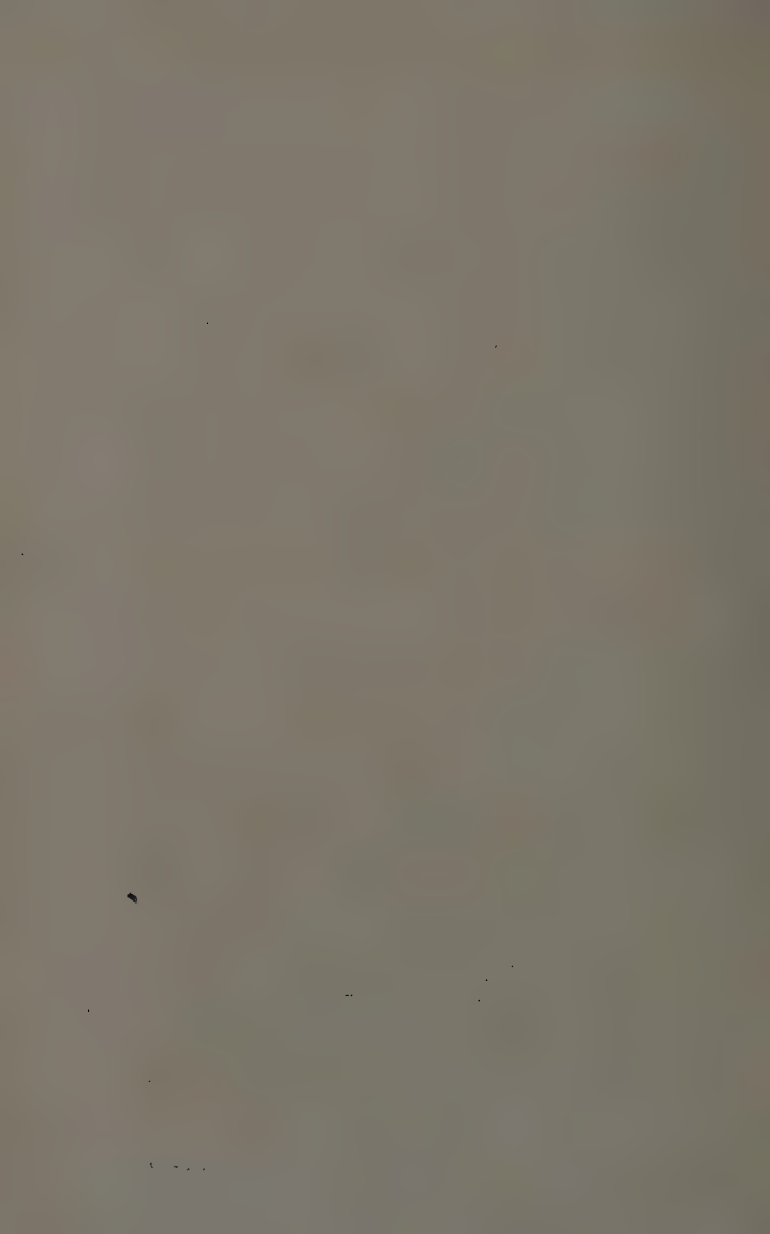


OUTSIDES PASSING



PASSING WITHOUT DRAWING THE OPPONENT

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for one thing, before they can start for the place where they may be again of service. The attackers, on the other hand, have simply to go straight ahead as fast as they can. The stoppage will not be a long one, but the fraction of a second makes all the difference. Now a pass at the moment I have indicated will make no alteration in the direction of the attackers' progress; but there may have been a necessary and appreciable deviation by the time even an extra couple of yards have been covered. And this deviation, it must be noticed, is away from the straight. Further, when the transfer is delayed, a forward coming across, or some other contingency, may easily change the whole geographical situation, and the defending side may just be given the opportunity again of getting on terms with their adversaries. Naturally a pass will not always be timed at this particular juncture; but the man in possession should be thinking of the possibility as a very important addition to his repertoire. And what is more, he should be thinking of it just as he is breaking the line—*i.e.* as soon as he has decided not to let his neighbour have the ball right away. Since it is quite unreasonable to give the ball to a person in a worse position than yourself, it is equally unreasonable to criticise a player as selfish or unselfish by the number of times he parts with the ball. Passing merely for passing's sake is a most futile proceeding; on the other hand, "swallowing" the ball is an equally reprehensible fault. Again, we must strive after the golden mean, and in many instances the question of the

actual "when" of the pass will be a difficult one to decide. Each case has to be judged on its merits, and will depend on the particular circumstances of the particular occasion. In his very laudable endeavour to make an opening ere parting, we sometimes find the "drawing" process exaggerated by the man in possession. Speaking generally, the drawing should not be very decidedly attempted if it involves much expenditure of time. As a matter of fact, the desired object can often be obtained if the opponent be induced merely to have his weight on the wrong foot. Sometimes it may pay to rush into an enemy, so that he will not be able to interfere with your own man; or it may be essential that you should be able to follow up, and if you delay, you run the risk of being tackled and thereby being put out of that special movement.

I think by now I have made good my first proposition that "to transfer the ball from one to another is not merely a mechanical proceeding." Incidentally, I hope I have not terrified any aspirant to perfection by showing what a complex business this passing is. I have dwelt on the difficulties with the object of inducing people to use their brains and to think out situations for themselves. Let nobody despair, however: a very little mental exertion will simplify the problem enormously, provided the elementary precepts as to position, straight running, "and full speed ahead" are kept continually in mind.

How should a pass be given? Bearing in mind that the line of flight should be well in front of

the intending taker, so that if anything he has slightly to stretch forward to catch the ball—which should be travelling about thigh-high from the ground—the pass must be going straight through the air—*i.e.* it must have no tendency to curl into the receiver's body. To ensure this straightness, the transfer should be made underhand, and with both hands. One-handed passing should not be tried, except for very long throws; it is almost impossible to avoid imparting a curl. In the 1913-14 issue of the valuable little "Football Annual," edited by C. J. B. Marriott, Adrian Stoop has some very pertinent observations on passing. I take the liberty of quoting his method: "The force (necessary for the proper delivery) is obtained from the muscles of the back, while the arms are used merely to control the direction. As an illustration, let us suppose the pass is to be given to the left. The action of the body is the same as if we are throwing some object which is held between the teeth, over the left shoulder, with the greatest possible force. It takes the form of a swing from the right hip, using the muscles down the right side of the back, finishing up with a hollow back and the chin pointing towards the left, while the shoulders have been swung through at an angle of about 45° . The arms should be held straight, though not necessarily rigid; the only conscious movement of them should be that they are raised towards the end of the swing. At the commencement, they are merely used to connect the ball with the shoulders. At the end of the swing, we are looking in the direction in

which the ball is to travel, and the direction of the ball will be that in which the arms are pointing when the ball is released.

Finally, do not slow down ere getting rid of the ball. As I have so frequently suggested, a passing movement will not be effective unless the giver and the taker are travelling at full speed.

Now as to the receiver. Though he ought to be well behind the passer, he should not be too wide of him. Probably about six to seven yards back and about five to six yards to the side will give a general idea of the position. It is difficult, however, to lay down any definite rule on the subject. The special circumstances of wind, rain and other atmospherical phenomena will have to be considered as well as any particular idiosyncrasies of the individuals concerned. When the ball is wet, for instance, the line must be nearer together than when it is dry; a long pass is always more difficult to take and give with accuracy. When we think of the size of a Rugger ball, it must be confessed that the number of "sticky" paws is nothing like what it ought to be. One reason for indifferent pass-catching is that people do not take the elementary precautions. They do not look at the ball, consider whether their eyes are open or shut, or think of the position of their head or limbs. They simply trust to arms and hands going forward at the right second, and the ball thereupon snuggling contentedly into the place assigned to it by those parts of their body. These, as often as not, will be dashed out with a snap and a jerk; and the ball seeing no friendly

welcome in their embrace, will not unreasonably prefer a more comfortable resting-place on its Mother Earth. "Keep your eye on the ball," and "never, never, snap your passes," are words of advice that the writer during his footer days often wishes had been seared into his brain. Though he says it himself, he could, on occasions, take most passes that came anywhere in front of him. Sometimes, however, and in more than one big game, a different story had to be told. He believes now that this sad state of affairs was due, not really so much to inherent vice as to the non-observance of the simple maxims he has been laying down. It has to be remembered that the greater the difficulties the more rigidly must these precepts be carried out. The more quickly a pass has to be taken, because of impending opposition, the less "snap" must there be in the gather. "Right back," "run straight," "take your passes at full speed," "don't snap at them," and "eyesight" are some of the points that no outside should forget for a single moment.

Just a word in conclusion about the "dummy." Though a pure bit of bluff, it must be timed in exactly the same way as an actual pass. Possibly a little preliminary "playing" or swinging with the body will be indulged in, but the real feint should not be brought off too early, otherwise it is not so likely to succeed.

Kicking. Unlike passing and most other branches of the game, where "full speed ahead" is so important, "slowing down" is an essential

preliminary to accurate kicking. If you do not steady yourself, it may be quite doubtful whether you will kick the ball at all; and you will certainly have very little idea of where its ultimate destination is likely to be.

It is one of those remarkable instances of the perversity of the human understanding that the man who rarely gives a pass except when standing still will be found travelling for all he knows when no alternative to kicking is open to him. It is not so much the length of the kick that tells in the majority of cases, as the certainty of its flying in the desired direction.

A large amount of the inferior kicking one sees is undoubtedly due to the unsteadiness of the kicker at the moment when he is applying his foot to the ball. In other words, he is not properly balanced. A potent cause of failure in punting is that the wrong part of the foot is used. Anywhere in the region of the toes invariably spells failure, to say nothing of the risks of a strained ankle if the ball is at all heavy, or the foot is not quite "taut."

The ball must leave the foot "well home," from the top of the instep just beneath the ankle; and the leg must follow right through, in the same way as the club in golf. Both hands should be used in holding the ball. The Rugby ball is much too big to be poised in one palm alone.

When finding touch, it is a great advantage to get on a curl in the direction you wish the ball to travel. As you should generally use the inside foot for touch-finding (*i.e.* the left for the right-

hand touch-line, and vice versa), it is a pull that is required.

It is difficult to describe how this pull can be obtained. The leg must be drawn across the intended line of flight in the direction of the desired curve; the ball should be held with one end pointing away from the body, and its side—not an end—should be kicked. It must leave the foot a little to the outside of the ordinary “well home”; in fact as much to the side of the boot’s “lace-up” as is consistent with not making a miss-kick.

The result when properly executed is remarkable. Not only is the ball made very much harder to catch by an opponent, but the knowledge that the swerve will come in at the end enables the kicker to attempt much greater length legitimately and safely. This method has been brought to great perfection in the west, and we see its possibilities in those tremendous touch-finding punts of which big Welsh backs like Bancroft, Winfield, and Davies, the old Oxonian, have been such notable exemplars. Unfortunately the art of imparting curl belongs only to advanced football. It is most difficult to acquire with certainty and precision. Before it can be attempted in a match, endless practice is necessary. Till proper control has been learnt, the risks of the ball flying off at a totally unexpected angle, or of an utter “foozle,” are too great to be contemplated even by the foolhardy.

A failing I have often noticed in kicking is the attempt to take the leather off the bladder. It is not necessary and is responsible for many mishaps.

There is one attacking manoeuvre which is rarely

done properly in London football. This is kicking across. Now, it is obvious that it is no use kicking when the other side are pretty certain to get to the ball first, and will have time to return into touch.

Yet one often sees the opposing back, and even the opposing three-quarters, being fed in this manner, to the detriment not only of any possibility of immediate success, but also of the lasting power of the forwards.

The right occasion to select for kicking across is when the ball can be sent *behind* the defending three-quarter line, or the back.

When it lands in front of them they have just as much chance of getting to it first as the attackers; in fact, rather more. If they do there is a great likelihood of the player securing possession being able to evade the one or two coming down on him, and going off with comrades in attendance.

As to whether the kick should be high or low, and what should be its direction, depends very largely on the position of the kicker. When in the neighbourhood of the touch-line, it will generally be found advisable to aim at the goal, and the kick should be a fairly high one, to give forwards an opportunity of getting under it. From the centre of the field, the direction should be somewhat to the touch-side of the touch-in goal flag. The trajectory will depend on whether your wing man has a prospect of catching the ball ere it bounces. It will, in either case, be a punt and not a drop-kick.

The reason why it will usually be found better

to aim for the centre, or for the touch-in goal flag, is that if things do not come off as anticipated, there is not so much chance of the return kick being a good one. From near touch the angle is not sufficiently wide, and from the centre the distance is too great, for touch regularly to be found with length and certainty.

Before discussing the drop-kick, mention must be made of the much neglected art of KICKING HIGH and following up. To perform it really well takes much practice; but especially when there is a helping wind it can be very effective. The common fault is not to kick high enough. It is surprising how much ground can be covered—and the man or the ball reached—when the skyward tendency of the ball is sufficiently pronounced.

Drop-Kicking. The drop-kick formerly was a most important feature of play. Nowadays we rarely see those wonderful shots from inside their own half-way line that men like Lennard Stokes were in the habit of bringing off successfully. Among the “moderns” there appear to be very few players with sufficient driving power at their command to make the ball travel such distances in the air.

J. T. Taylor, K. G. Macleod, and R. A. Lloyd, the Irishman, are, however, worthy successors of the giants of old, and of all of them it is not too much to say that their opponents had very good cause for anxiety whenever they have attempted a “pot.” I well remember a match in which Macleod, who had previously dropped a magnificent goal, was given another chance, through a bad

mistake of the opposing back in the last minute of the game. Though taken from the wrong side of the half-way line, the kick only missed by inches.

J. T. Taylor's prowess is also well known, and I have seen him bring off extraordinary shots at what appeared to be impossible ranges and well-nigh impossible angles.

Of men actually playing, Lloyd is the only renowned long-distance dropper. Though he does not perhaps "drive" quite as far as the other two, I am not sure whether he does not give even Taylor points in direction.

Certain Welsh teams are among the most prolific goal-droppers of the present day; but they do not usually attempt the manœuvre at great distance. Their penchant is for short "placings" over the cross-bar—a most disquieting proceeding for the enemy, at which some of their players are remarkably expert.

Most people judge dropping at goal by an utterly wrong standard. Attempts are not necessarily justified by success—though he would be a very hypercritical theorist who would have the courage to lecture the performer under such circumstances. Nor, on the other hand, should they be execrated, as they always are, on account of failure.

There is, unfortunately, too marked a tendency to praise or condemn according to the result. That "nothing succeeds like success" is a principle which requires many modifications in actual practice; and one of the reasons why drop-kicking has fallen into comparative desuetude is because footballers will not make the necessary modifica-

tions in judging whether the kick ought or ought not to have been attempted.

Though dropping at goal does not as a general rule entail a superlative degree of proficiency or accuracy, most men should not try unless the prospects are distinctly favourable and they feel quite sure of themselves. It depends far more on confidence and assurance; and if these are absent failure almost invariably follows an attempt.

Owing to our somewhat mechanical conception of what attack should be, and owing to the attitude that I have suggested we wrongly take up as regards drop-kicking, there is no inducement for a man to try. He will not get into trouble with the authorities if he does not, while if he does and it does not come off, he will almost certainly be convicted of a bad mistake.

Confidence and assurance are not therefore likely to be engendered; and so, if he decides to trust his luck, he will either be flurried or his attention will not be properly concentrated on the object in view.

No fixed rule can be laid down as to when it is advisable to drop for goal in preference to passing out. We can approach the question, however, from the negative standpoint and say when the attempt should *not* be made.

It is no use kicking when opponents are so near that the ball is bound to touch them before it goes over the cross-bar. This is always being forgotten. People seem to imagine that it is when they are hemmed in by the opposition, with no prospect of being able to get clear or of getting the

ball away advantageously, that they ought to drop. The result usually is that the kick gets charged down and very probably the defenders break away with a dribble or otherwise relieve the pressure. It is useless then to have a "go for the four points" unless there is a clear space immediately in front, sufficient for the ball to have a chance of rising in the air. I am by no means suggesting that the proximity of opponents is a conclusive reason against any attempts at goal-dropping; a clear space of very small dimensions may offer a good opportunity, but there must be a clear space of some sort.

An instance of the sort of occasion where success is probable is when a centre three-quarter receives the ball and is just able to avoid the man who is marking him, but has little prospect of getting right through, and cannot pass without risk of an intercept. He is comparatively unhampered for a second and, if he is favourably placed, a very excellent opportunity presents itself.

Our kicker, however, will require some nerve and initiative to make the attempt, as there will pretty certainly be many only too ready to point out to him—if the ball does not go where it was intended—the alternative he might have adopted.

For short drops it is best to use the same part of the foot as in punting; greater accuracy can thereby be obtained, and the ball will rise quicker than from off the toe. At longer range the toe should be used. More driving power can be put into the kick, and there is not the same necessity for the ball to rise speedily.

Because of the then concentration of the defence, a well-known authority on the game has suggested to me that when the opposing side's goal-posts are very adjacent, the drop should be the regular and not the exceptional method of attack. Whoever is to make the attempt should be well behind the scrum—in fact, as far back as the half's capacity of getting the ball quickly to him will permit. Since the defenders will be paying particular attention to the individual men they are responsible for, the full-back might possibly be justified in coming up to perform the task. As his intervention would not be expected, he would probably find himself with just a fraction more time at his command than the flying half or a three-quarter. The manœuvre, of course, would have to be arranged previously, and the scrum half must know exactly where he is to send the ball.

To recapitulate. The great thing in dropping at goal is to keep your head and not to get flurried. A superlatively good kick is not necessary; anything at all respectable will probably do all that is required. Take as deliberate an aim as you can and, above all, do not allow any possibility of failure to cross your mind.

Dropping Out. Wind is a very important factor to consider in dropping out and will have a great bearing on the length the kicker should aim at achieving.

If, for instance, there is a strong wind blowing up-field it will often pay to kick as far as one can. The wind being all in favour of one side must

correspondingly handicap the other, whose chances of getting in a good return will not be favourable.

When the drop-out is the other way, it is very essential that the other team should not be allowed to get in a return kick at all. The ball, therefore, should be made to fall just about the place where forwards following up hard will be able to get to it.

To do this with accuracy and regularity requires practice. Nothing is more disheartening to forwards, or tires them out more quickly, than futile dashes up-field after kicks that they cannot possibly reach before, or at the same time as, their opponents. Nothing, on the other hand, is more unpleasant for those opponents than having to wait for the ball to come down with the knowledge that fierce, keen forwards are speeding on their way and will probably arrive at the most uncomfortable and inopportune moment.

From personal recollection of many painful experiences of this nature, I very thoroughly appreciate the value and the utility of proficiency in dropping out and following up. It is best to kick from the centre (or from the other side of the ground) towards the touch-line, as the opposition is not so likely to return effectively at the narrower angle they will have to kick at. Speaking generally, wind or no wind, the kick should be a high one.

As a very occasional alternative to the usual method the trick of making a short kick in the direction not expected is worth mentioning. When all the enemy are massed on one side of the field in anticipation, and when one or two of your outsides know what is going to happen, a gentle

kick, which can easily be fielded by one of these players without anyone being near to hinder him, may lead up to a very dangerous movement. It can be arranged for your speediest man to get the ball; there will be time for him to gather it safely, and the prospects of his having a thirty yards' run before he is even challenged are of the best. Someone in the secret can be in attendance to support him—and there you are. The writer once had the pleasure of taking the New Zealanders by surprise in this way; and, on that occasion, it was only the superior speed of one of their three-quarters that prevented a try being scored against them. Douglas Morkel tried the same "wheeze" in the England *v.* South Africa encounter of 1913. It came to nothing, however, as a scrum was ordered because a forward was in front of Morkel as he kicked—not because of the failure of the little move itself. A dodge of this kind is only worth trying a few times in a season. It is so ridiculously easy when it comes off, and it has the merit that it is not likely to lead to serious trouble if anything does not eventuate.

Place-Kicking. When kicking goals after tries have been scored, particular attention should be paid to the way in which the ball is placed. Many failures are due, not so much to bad kicking, but to the fact that the ball rolls over through being insecurely rested on the ground.

The first thing, then, is for the kicker to dig a proper hole. It is not sufficient merely to kick at the earth with the toe of the boot. However soft the ground may be, the heel must be used

and the sides of the hole unmistakably defined. This is important, not only to prevent the ball from wobbling, but in order that the placer may see exactly where the hole is and thereby obviate any chance of his putting the ball down askew.

In making the heel-mark the back must be turned to the goal-posts that are to be the objective, and care must be taken to ensure the angle of the hole being suitable to the line of flight the ball is intended to follow.

Placing goals is not a "one man job," and needs co-operation and understanding between the kicker and placer for success. The placer is a most important factor. We might almost compare him to the accompanist at a piano who, although not able to make up for lack of vocal capacity, plays a great part in ensuring the necessary conditions for the production of the singer's best. In other words, the functions of the accompanist are largely negative; while the most skilful cannot induce the notes of a Patti to come out of the mouth of some egotistic stage-struck lady, a bad accompanist will mar the effect of the most brilliant performance.

It is the same in place-kicking; and you will not find good kicking when the kicker cannot place implicit confidence in the other fellow. In order to have this confidence, a little preliminary practice together is very necessary. But, anyhow, the placer must be told definitely when he is to put the ball down and take his hands away.

While the kicker is seeing that it is pointed as he wants it, the placer should hold the ball in the

fingers, and not in the palm of the hand. It will then be easier for him to see the sides of the hole. Now comes the most important duty, placing the ball exactly over the hole, so that when it is finally deposited in it it will stay securely in the desired position. This is a thing that must be very carefully attended to, and there must be no doubt on the subject in the mind of either player.

The onus and responsibility lie, of course, on the placer. As soon as, *not till*, the word is given the ball should be rested in the mark, and the hands drawn right away quickly and unostentatiously. This last is to be remembered not so much to prevent their being kicked as to ensure the kicker's attention not being distracted. It is hardly necessary to observe that the placer should make no subsequent movement till the kick is well on its way.

The kicker, we have observed, should first of all see to the mark. This being satisfactorily accomplished, he has next to point the ball in the direction required, and to place it at the correct slant. The farther the kick, the more turned over should the ball be.

One sees kicks taken from such seemingly quaint positions, either right close to the goal-line or very far out, that it may not be inadvisable to suggest that midway between extremes will be found most satisfactory in the long run. If too near, the risk of having the ball charged down is unnecessarily run; while too far away entails the equally unnecessary risk that a slightly "pulled" or "sliced" ball will curl off just sufficiently to miss its billet.

Even for a kick right from touch, the neighbourhood of the twenty-five line is quite far enough out. What is gained by having a wider angle to aim at is more than counterbalanced by the loss of accuracy that such a long kick entails.

We have now to think of the question of direction, and here the absence or presence of wind will be the chief thing to consider. Allowance, of course, will have to be made for a cross-wind, but from my own experience—and preaching what I have never consistently practised—it will be found more profitable to underestimate rather than to overestimate such allowance.

It is remarkable how little the flight of a cleanly kicked ball will be affected even by a strong gust. By a “clean” kick I mean one that has no bias either to the right or left. Now, if one is thinking too much of the wind, I am certain one is often tempted at the last moment slightly to alter one’s leg action and to try to put on a slight “pull” or “slice” to correct a fancied misdirection. Either will inevitably be accentuated by the action of a cross-current of air.

These preliminaries having all been duly attended to, there only remains the actual kicking of the ball. In order to do this a few steps back will have to be taken, and here extremes again are to be avoided. The one-step-only method may work satisfactorily on days when the kicker is in exceptional form, but for most players neither too few nor too many steps will produce the best results.

While making these steps, which are the

equivalent of "addressing" the ball in golf, the eyes must be kept fixed on that special part of the ball one is going to kick. Even after the ball has left the ground the head must not come up with a sudden jerk to follow the flight.

I believe that the kick should be similar to the swing at golf. The foot must be kept taut, and should not be pointed downwards when kicking. The leg should follow right through after the toe has met the ball, and there must be no attempt to stop half-way the full and free swing of the limb. The reason for the follow-through is that it helps to correct the effects of slight mistiming.

The balance of the body at the moment of impact is most important. Many people kick too soon—*i.e.* they do not get sufficiently near the ball ere swinging, and so in effect only meet it in the course of the leg's follow-through. If the ball—in golfing parlance—is to be *swept* away, the weight of the body should be just above the point of contact at the moment that the toe meets the leather.

Charging Down. We will now look at a kick from the "other fellow's" point of view. How ought a kick to be charged down? The majority of players, when they attempt it, jump straight at the man who has just kicked. If the jump has been judged with brutal precision, the kicker will pretty certainly realise that football boots have studs attached to them, and it is quite likely that he will be hurt. On the other hand, the jumper runs the risk of a similar fate befalling him by

encountering the follow-through part of the kicker's leg-swing.

This is the kind of play that brings Rugby into disrepute and, as a matter of fact, it does not accomplish the desired object. If we think carefully over the matter we shall soon see why the man who jumps direct practically never touches the ball. For one thing, the kicker is standing at an angle to the touch-line, and rarely kicks straight up or down the field—*i.e.* parallel with touch; then, again, as one or other leg is used, the kick, for the first part of its journey, must travel to the side of the kicker.

To get, therefore, in the line of the kick the direction of the jump must be to the right or left. In ordinary circumstances about a yard to one side or other of the kicker is the most likely position to aim at—the side, of course, depending on which foot is being used for the kick: thus, for a right-foot “hoof” the man charging down will jump to his own left, and vice versa.

He should not jump too soon, otherwise a wily opponent may check himself in time and, instead of kicking, run past the charger while he is in the air.

Remarkable to relate, this very simple tip—to aim a yard to the side of, and not straight at, the kicker—seems hardly known at all to Rugby men. Jack Crabbie, my first Oxford skipper, taught it to his team. I have done my best—with singularly small results—to spread the notion. It is the only method that I know by which, in the ordinary course of events, the desired result can possibly be secured. It may be successful even when only

one man is charging down. In the hope of encouraging others, I will say that by its means I have occasionally brought off what was quite erroneously applauded as marvellous play. It once went so far as to give me a try. The ball caught me fair in the middle, and as my body and lower extremities very naturally doubled forward it stuck. I staggered on some yards and dropped to the ground, luckily over the goal-line, and very pleased I hadn't to go farther.

When men are dashing down full speed upon an enemy and endeavouring to tackle him ere he can kick, they will find they have more chance of making a successful dive if they are well forward on their toes when they get near him. Should they then be racing with their heads right back they will be off their balance for tackling or diving, and will usually have what in some quarters is described as "not an earthly."

The proper way for forwards to follow up—either in charging down after a drop-out or in rushing—is in open fan-shape formation. Two should follow the line of the kick and another should be just behind them to cover any mistakes, such as overrunning the ball, or to start perhaps a dribble if the men in front cause the other side to fumble. The others should rush straight up the field on either side, not too far away, of course, to let an opponent slip through if he succeeds in clearing his immediate enemies, but sufficiently wide to make a practically impossible detour incumbent on him if he is to escape untouched. Let them all remember that unless they hare

after the ball for all they are worth there is very little point in following up at all.

Catching, Fielding and Marks. Just a caution about catching and fielding the ball. Never snap at it, but watch it coming to you and receive it with a little "give." Furthermore, when you have to catch a high kick, try, if possible, to get in position before the ball is near you, so that you will have the chance, at anyrate, of steadying yourself ere catching. Securing a high punt at full speed, when a little preliminary energy would have given you ample time, may be magnificent gallery play, but as football it cannot be too strongly deprecated. Everything that has been said elsewhere about "eyesight" applies with double force to fielding. You can pick up the ball in all sorts of quaint positions, when you are watching with a "glued gaze." If you are not, you will continually find the ends of your fingers guilty of knock-ons and similar tragedies. The "give" necessary for sure gathering only accompanies a wide-open optic.

From one point of view it is indeed a blessing that the standard of kicking for and of following up is not higher. It would place the poor waiter for the ball in a very unenviable position. Under most circumstances there is an opportunity of doing something in the way of aggression or of avoiding it having results on yourself. But in this instance there is nothing to be done except to make certain of catching the ball. The difficulty naturally is to estimate the pace of the oncoming forwards, and this, I think, must be

done when they are still at a comparative distance away. A glance even cannot be spared when they are right on their object. The object then must have all his attention devoted to the flight of the ball he is on the point of catching. An error in judging pace is very easy to make, especially when that judgment has to be formed on the information gained by a very hurried sweep of the eye. This accounts for the frequency of marks made when no opponents are within yards and yards.

Such mistakes, however, are not very bad, though occasionally most annoying when a pass or a run would have led to a good opening. I am inclined to think that marking, under doubtful conditions, might be indulged in more often with effect, and especially when the ball has been obtained from a short kick, as in the case of one of the forwards who has dropped back.

The other people are generally on him too quickly to give him much chance of putting in a good return himself, and it is worth remembering that the free kick subsequent to a mark can be taken by the best kicker on the side.

The Art of Handing-Off. When you are running with the ball you should "tuck" it away on the side which is farthest from the opponent you are next likely to meet. Some splendid try-getters hold the ball in front of them with both hands, but this is a method which, though perhaps excusable in great genius, should not be copied by the ordinary performer—except perhaps when "jinking."

The reasons are fairly obvious; in the first place it does not tend to increase pace, as no shoulder and very little body work can be applied to assist progression; more important, however, is that no handing-off can be indulged in.

Many writers have deplored the way in which this very useful adjunct for warding off the enemy has fallen out of use. There seems to be no good reason for its obsolescence unless it is that where formerly players would have handed-off they now elect to pass.

Handing-off may be very unpleasant and result in numerous sprained and dislocated fingers and thumbs unless you take care to use the flat of the hand and not the finger-tips. Clenched fists, of course, must not be used; and it is not necessary, as a rule, to exert considerable force or violence.

There is doubtless much savage satisfaction to be derived out of getting the would-be tackler under the chin and seeing him topple backwards, but for the purpose of preventing his getting hold of you it is generally sufficient merely to push him smartly out of his direction or, still better—when it can be done—to assist him too far and therefore past his destination.

These milder proceedings have the merit that they lose less time. If the push is given at the correct second it is hardly necessary to slow down at all. The correct second depends very largely on circumstances, usually just before the man is going to tackle, when he is somewhat off his balance.

Occasionally you will be able to clear yourself

even later by merely pushing down hand or arm before it has had an opportunity to grip properly. It will naturally be easier to hand off when your opponent is going high, but a low tackle can frequently be averted with a little extra management.

Of late years perapsh the most prominent exemplar has been V. H. M. Coates. On occasion—witness the 1913 Anglo-Scottish match—he has brought it out with very telling effect. More than once was his path strewn with the prone figure of very capable tacklers. Nothing shows up indifferent collaring so decidedly as handing-off. It is a pity we cannot rejuvenate some of these old heroes and induce them to show us how useful are the hands when you want to go clean through teams.

CHAPTER VI

THE FULL-BACK

THERE seems a prejudice against playing full-back, as being a position in which there are more kicks than halfpence to be garnered. This, in a sense, is true, but it is only so because there are very few people who have appreciated the real nature of the duties that the post involves. A back ought never to be dull or bored, no matter how the game goes; he should be too fully occupied in anticipating the possibilities as well as the probabilities of the various situations as they arise. His excellence very largely depends on his being able to gauge these correctly and in getting into position beforehand to deal with them. He cannot merely stand still and watch as many people appear to think. He has got to follow very carefully all that goes on, and be ready for any emergency, such as an intercepted pass or a breakdown in an attacking movement. Though he will be in most cases concerned indirectly, it is utterly wrong for him to imagine that he has no work to do when his own side are making progress towards their opponents' goal-line. He must move as his comrades in front of him move, and in the ordinary course of events he should be right behind the

ball, wherever that may be. At times this will involve his having to run right across the field and back again. Judging from the amount of exercise I have obtained when playing full-back, I fail to understand how anybody in a modern game can ever require an extra jersey to keep him warm. The art of full-back play consists in making everything easy of accomplishment. That will never be unless the player does all in his power regularly to be a little previous. "Gallery play" should only be resorted to as a last desperate resource. In saying this I would certainly make an exception in catching the ball ere it has bounced. Whether foes be near or distant, I believe that a full-back should always try to catch the ball on the volley even if it entail the most prodigal appearance of sensationalism. Sad experience has convinced me that there is no telling what a Rugger ball will do when once it has touched the earth. In this instance the risks, even from blatant showiness, are not so great as those which proceed from the tamer and less exhilarating method of waiting for the bounce. As Gregor MacGregor once said, "a Rugby football has not a philanthropic nature."

The first qualification for a full-back is that he should be a sure fielder and, when occasion demands it, a fearless saver. Remembering that if he doesn't stop a rush others will rarely be able to, he must make certain of getting possession of the ball—and where this is impossible he must see to it that the enemy have at least to deal with his prostrate body. Brilliancy that in *any* way

infringes on safety is not justifiable in the last defender. In defence generally a knowledge of all that poise and balance imply will be an invaluable asset. Having the weight, for instance, on the proper foot at the proper moment may just enable an "impossible" tackle to be brought off. Without balance quick turning will take time. Kicking ability, it goes without saying, is absolutely necessary, and the back's great aim is to be able to find touch whenever he wants to.

Touch-finding requires much practice, and unless one is very proficient it is as well not to be too ambitious. A certain twenty-five yards is more useful than a glorious but intermittent forty. It is hardly necessary to observe that both feet should be "taught" to kick, though it is remarkable how many excellent performers are able to use only one with any degree of safety.

Even among backs of International standard this failing is noticeable, and the amount of extra work and manœuvring they have to do in order to counteract their deficiency is interesting to watch, though it seems a pity that so much ingenuity should have to be wasted. There is no valid reason why a player should not be able to kick equally well with both feet.

The back who is an expert drop-kick has, of course, splendid opportunities of displaying the art for score-adding purposes. A low raking drop also is often the best means of cheating a difficult wind when touch-finding.

When a team is playing well it is quite remarkable how little downright tackling the full-back

will be called upon to attempt. It is equally remarkable how much of this kind of defensive work a capable exponent will "place" with others. It sounds rather a strange thing to say, but the more defence he personally can avoid the better it will be. Now if we think of it, he is only required to collar when the defence has been broken. This fact makes his task all the more difficult, as the attackers have fuller opportunity of bringing such deadly weapons as the swerve into operation. Is it possible to throw up a sort of intermediate barrier ere the last wall—*i.e.* the back himself—is assailed? It is in throwing up this barrier that the great performer will show his greatness. What he will do must depend on circumstances. Occasionally, when other defenders can back him up by coming across or otherwise, he will find it policy to be the impediment himself—whereupon he will dash up and try to tackle or save straight away. But frequently such proceedings are too risky. Then his endeavour will be to deflect the attack so far off the "straight" that it will be driven into contact with an out-lying portion of the defence which originally was unable to be of assistance. Where is the most likely quarter for help to arrive from will be the chief factor in deciding the direction of the turning. When no quarter gives hope of reinforcements the deflection—where the position in the field makes it possible—should be tried towards the touch-line. When dependent on himself alone, the full-back has more chance of cutting off the attacker near touch or of pushing him over the line. The

danger is that unexpected help has less chance of becoming useful, and without going to the extreme of leaving it too late a back must not make up his mind too quickly that he has only got himself to rely upon.

How to deal with a short kick over his head is another very trying problem our poor man has to consider. When this manœuvre is well performed, the only chance is to turn quickly and simply hare back. But it is often possible to induce the other fellow to kick at the wrong moment, either too soon or too late. A sudden dash forward—remembering balance all the time—may just do the trick.

But perhaps the worst position of all is when two opponents are clear away, and they have to be dealt with single-handed, because no efforts at the “turning” have had any appreciable effect. The odds then should certainly be on the attackers. Perhaps the least hopeless chance will be for the back to endeavour to get unexpectedly soon on to the man with the ball, and spoil the probable pass by the hardness of the tackle. The only advice that can be given under such conditions is to keep your head and account for one man anyhow.

Where to stand is a question that does not admit of an exact answer. Ordinarily the test will be that the back has to run forward if anything to catch the other side's big non-touch-finding kicks. This will probably be some twenty to thirty yards behind the three-quarter line. It depends, however, on a multitude of factors, such

as wind, the length of the enemy's kicks, the back's own speed, etc. When playing *with* a strong wind, it may sometimes pay to come up nearer to the three-quarters. There is, however, a certain risk attaching; but where the ball is continually dropping just over their heads it may be policy in order to avoid other and more serious ones. Similarly against a wind a more backward stand will be necessary. I should like now to talk advanced football for a few paragraphs. I use the word "advanced" because I should be sorry if young players were to imbibe the idea that the higher finesse was to be striven after before the more essential lessons of play had been thoroughly appreciated.

How far should a full-back ever join in attack? is the first question. I am not one of those who would reply, "Never!" Very good cause, however, must be shown for participation; and the back must not be considered as part of the regular attacking machine. But when the state of the game causes risk-taking to be the only possible expedient, then the very unexpectedness of his entry may be effective. The one great caution to be remembered is that if ever the back comes up the field for *any* purpose, *somebody must always drop back to take his place*. But apart from any complicated manœuvres, the high kick and follow-up can be made into a very offensive measure. In extension of this, when the people on the other side of the field are rightly placed, there is no reason why the "last line" should not kick across and go straight up the field to put his comrades

on-side. I have alluded in the previous chapter to the back attempting to drop a goal from a scrum under the enemy's goal-posts. In this case also one of the three-quarters must drop back.

The subtlest and most entrancing pleasures of full-back play consist in nursing your own forwards and in tiring out your opponents. The assistance that such men as the elder Bancroft and Strand-Jones gave to the fortunate sides they belonged to was incalculable. Of course it is not every back that can make opposing forwards follow him from one side of the field to the other and back again—and then just as he has “kidded” them that this time at anyrate they have got him, to find touch forty yards up-field. Full-back chasing is the most killing job that forwards can indulge in. Now in attempting anything of the sort, a back must bear in mind that it is simply criminal conduct to “play about” unless he is *absolutely certain of finding touch* as the final to his little amusement. If his own forwards have any reason at all that will prevent their trusting him, the proceedings are worse than useless. The only justification is not that the game itself may come off, but that his own people know that there is no risk of failure, and can therefore save themselves whilst the enemy is being worn out and disorganised. Every full-back, however, must make the opposing forwards come down to him every time. He must leave himself plenty of time to get in his kick; but that is a very different thing from kicking when there is nobody within



JOHN E. RAPHAEL HAS THE BALL



J. G. WILL

twenty yards, as one frequently sees in lower-class football.

Among the big men in this position that I myself have seen, A. R. Smith, the Scottish Oxonian, was probably the best all-round player. He could kick a prodigious length, he was a safe fielder, and a deadly tackler; above all, he was one of the fastest men that ever played full-back. W. J. Bancroft, whose International career was so lengthy, will be awarded the palm for sheer cleverness. He had the most uncanny capacity of inducing forwards to devote their energies to hunting him and to neglect the more respectable pleasures of playing the game as it ought to be played. He has been known to carry the proposition that a back should place as much defence on others as possible, to the extreme of disappearing from the immediate scene of action when a particularly ferocious fellow had to be tackled. But this was really his only fault; and his capacity in every other branch of play was so remarkable that he rightly takes his place in the select band of "all-time classics." J. F. Byrne was just about the longest kicker that has appeared during the last quarter of a century. I remember, as a small boy, seeing him place a goal from the half-way line for England. It was a habit of his. Of this century's full-backs, I should be inclined to give pride of place to Bancroft's successor on the Welsh side, Strand-Jones, the Oxonian. It used to be said that his defence was weak; this is not correct. I don't say that terrific tackling was a superlative feature of his play, but his saving was fearless,

and his judgment magnificent. I shall have more to say about him in another chapter.

Gamlin, Lyon and Johnston, Winfield and J. Bancroft, are among the names that occur to one of full-back heroes of modern times. Gamlin was a little slow, otherwise I should prefer him to any. Lyon's whole-hearted methods were always delightful to watch, and made him a pleasing figure on every football field. Like Johnston, he had a wonderful gift for extricating himself from difficult situations. The latter in some ways is the most extraordinary player there has ever been. He is not particularly fast, he is not a particularly good kick, but he never fails when danger threatens. He is always to be depended on in an emergency ; in fact that is the only time when he is absolutely safe. It is then that he brings off his best kicks ; it is then that he never looks like missing the ball ; and when it is a question of saving or tackling, we have ocular demonstration of the fact that friend Johnston is there every time.

G. Morkel, the South African, is without exception the most stylish back I have seen. His kicking is the acme of grace. And its length ! His fielding is a perfect poem of elegance—I do not know how otherwise to describe it. Of course it is brilliant, but somehow it doesn't seem so ; it is so eminently safe. What a pleasure it must be to play in front of him.

CHAPTER VII

THREE-QUARTER PLAY

THERE is little that need be addressed specially to a three-quarter about the various branches of defence. Bearing in mind the fact that it is always easier to save from the side, a wing should be on the look-out for the chance of dashing in at right angles to a rush or dribble, and either picking the ball up from forwards' feet, or of upsetting the movement by charging into it and staying its progress.

Three-quarters must never think that they are responsible only for the defence in their own part of the field. They, both centre and wing, must be fully prepared to dash across to help their comrades. In so doing, I need hardly point out that the opposite touch-in goal flag will generally be their objective. They must be on the look-out, however, for a judicious kick across by the opponents—but this does not prevent them *starting* off at full speed. One of the most delightful possibilities of attack is to escape an opponent by side-stepping, or by swerving round him. In order to do either successfully it is most important to have ideas on how to change one's pace. Few people do this really well ; as a matter of fact, few

ever seem to think of its necessity. In deceiving an opponent as to speed there must be no indication given previously of any intended change. As in passing, there must be no slowing up before the ball is transferred, so in "changing gear" everything must be done at top pace. The essential thing is the timing. If you swerve at the psychological moment and at the same time put on those telling extra ounces of fastness, you will probably succeed; if you do not, a clever defender has a good chance of getting you. In swerving, as opposed to running round, it is not the distance you swerve that tells so much as what is conveyed to the other man's mind as to that distance. I have noticed at times, when I have managed to beat a back, that whereas I had only deviated a couple of feet or so from my original course, he had been led to anticipate a two or three yards' change, and had consequently placed himself quite out of range of the spot where I really did go by him.

It is worth remembering that in most cases it pays not to change direction more than is absolutely necessary. You are not then so likely to encounter another enemy whose proximity had not entered into your calculations. There are many occasions when a wing three-quarter will find himself with only the back to pass. If he feels he can get through along the touch-line, he will be well advised to hare for all he is worth. If, however, there is a good prospect of his being cut off by the back, he has to set to work to make an opening for himself.

This means that he has to out-manceuvre the defender. His chief object — apart from such tactics as changing pace—will be to work the back so far towards the centre of the field that at the critical moment there will be sufficient room for him to go through on the touch side, if that course is found to be most desirable.

Speaking very generally, I think it will be better for a wing to work for the outside opening and to leave the cut-in towards the centre to take care of itself. I am alluding to times when the only chance is for the individual to go on his own. Cutting-in should be regarded as a means rather of taking advantage of a sudden opportunity, which very possibly will present itself during the efforts to secure a dash for the corner flag.

Passing a full-back by the apparently simple device of kicking over the defender's head is well known. As a matter of fact, to propel the ball with your foot in the direction you want it to go is not such an easy task when you are travelling at full speed. If you do it carelessly, a bad "slice" is the frequent result, and you must also be careful that you do not kick it too far.

The kick—a short punt—should not be delayed too long, otherwise the back, though he is not allowed to tackle you, will most probably succeed somehow in delaying you; and thereby give another of his side a chance of getting to the ball before you. On the other hand, the back should be made to anticipate having to tackle so that he will have to change his balance before he can turn round. There is, naturally, the drawback that

you can never be quite certain how a Rugby ball is going to bounce. However well you make your little kick there is always a chance that it will twist off at a hopeless angle for you to gather again. There is, anyhow, not much prospect of your being able to catch the ball before it reaches the ground. The kick, therefore, should not be too high. Now, when you get up to the ball again after successfully avoiding your opponent, do not be in too great a hurry to pick it up whilst it is rolling. A judicious few yards' dribble will probably bring it under better control, and it is quite likely then to bounce rightly, so that you will be able to grasp it with safety and comfort, and without the risk of that particularly aggravating "knock forward" spoiling all your previous effort. I well remember throwing away a good chance of scoring in an International match a few years back by attempting to gather a bad pass while the ball was on the ground instead of using my feet as I ought to have done. For outsides, the control under which the ball is kept is the important thing in dribbling.

One word on backing up in attack. Let the wing be particularly careful where he is standing when the attack is proceeding on the other side of the ground to himself. Let him be behind it, so that he can make full use of such an eventuality as a kick across.

Centre play is more difficult than wing, because it is more complicated, and there is more to think about. The great idea that a centre should have in mind is to make openings for his wing—not that

he will necessarily try to pass every time, but that he will think of breaking through himself or of repassing to his fellow-centre as incidental to his main function. Many wings have the habit of edging away from their neighbour, and few have the capacity for following their inside man when he makes any deviation from the normal. These are things that must be rectified; and for their rectification there must exist complete understanding between all the members of a line. Such little japes as taking the ball literally out of the next man's hands; of rushing across him either in front or behind, and receiving the ball in passage; such a trick as missing out a player from passing movement; when to be backing up to take a repass—all require practice and sympathetic comprehension to bring out their full value. Not only must you "know yourself," but you must know your neighbours, to form part of a really successful three-quarter line.

As a line, the Scottish three-quarters of 1900 deserve, I think, the first place. Welsh, Phipps Turnbull, Timms and Fell were the units; but though, of course, they were all great players, I am not sure that any of them would be in my World side. Together, however, they approached perfection. Against England that year they gave an object lesson of how "combined individualism" should be carried out. Their strategy has never been bettered, even by Wales or by the New Zealanders. Hardly ever did they transfer the ball without some reason; hardly ever did they spoil a break-through by too much individualism;

and their tackling was of the kind that upset the opposition in more ways than one. Strange to relate, they failed to reproduce their highest form in the following season.

The Teddy Morgan, Gwynn Nicholls, Gabe and Llewellyn "combine," slightly later, is another that will live in history. For cleverness and polish you could want nothing better. They are to football what Greek culture is to literature. No wonder Wales was well-nigh invincible at that period. Of these great Welsh and Scottish players, Gwynn Nicholls, perhaps, has left the greatest name. He was not showy, and often it was difficult to realise how much he was doing for his side. Like Rawson Robertshaw and A. J. Gould, he had that unexplainable power, not only of keeping a line together, but of getting the best out of everyone in it—and this too without any sacrifice of himself as a player. It is impossible, for obvious reasons, even to mention by name all the men who deserve to be remembered among the three-quarters of modern times. I will mention only three others. All of them in their own way have been or are outstanding personalities. The great burly form of Johnny Birkett always inspired a wholesome respect among his opponents on the football field. He is not perhaps an ideal exponent of football art; he has many faults, and he is not always consistent. The most prejudiced "ancient," however, could desire nothing better than his tackling; and his barging through is immense in its effectiveness and in the havoc it plays with the enemy's forces. That K. G. MacLeod retired before his

full prime is a misfortune. There was not a single attribute or quality, physical or otherwise, that he did not possess in superlative degree. Of powerful physique, he was one of the fastest men ever seen on the field. His ability to "beat the pistol" in track-running was faithfully reproduced at Rugger. A brilliant field at cricket, he was equally brilliant in gathering indifferent passes. One of the surest and the longest kicks of recent years, both at dropping and punting, he was a beautiful collarer, and had that inestimable virtue of being able to get to his man at the same time as the ball. When he was playing with people who interested him—and who could keep somewhere near him—he made the most perfect openings; and what is more, his pace made it possible for him to take return passes from the fastest wings when they were right away. We did not always see him at his best, and at times he was inclined to overdo kicking—but verily he was an Admirable Crichton. Gwynn Nicholls and he are two of the players that we moderns do not mind comparing with the celebrities of any other generation. Poulton Palmer is still (1914) playing football, and he is still at his best. It is therefore difficult to talk about him as a classic. But we can say this: that no side is really secure when he is playing against them. He also is not always consistent, but we cannot expect genius of his order to be at its possessor's beck and call like a well-trained dog. It is there though, and even when he doesn't leave the door of his treasure-house open throughout a game, we usually get a

sufficient glimpse of its contents to make other treasure-houses seem empty in comparison. Those who talk of the "Poulton risk" can never have realised the effect that his mere presence produces on the other side. He may be missing all his passes; he may be starving his wing; and then suddenly something happens; he has perhaps won the match—straight away, "just like that." He has failed, it is true, to take many an easy pass, but it is not because he has indifferent hands—very much the reverse; it is rather, in most cases, because he is striving to take a chance that the ordinary first-class player had not dreamt even of looking for. When one thinks of it, few movements eventuate in tries. Every time Poulton Palmer gets properly going a score is imminent. His "jink" is all by itself in modern-day Rugger; and he has the most wonderful knack of threading his way through the safest opposition. Those who have not seen one of his gorgeous runs are to be pitied: they have missed one of the most sensational spectacles that can be witnessed on a football field.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HALF-BACK

THE two people who play between the forwards and the three-quarters have widely different functions in modern Rugby. We have recognised the dissimilarity by distinguishing them as scrum and fly, or stand-off half. In the development of the game, what has happened is that we now play only one half in the old connotation of the term, and have introduced a new position called by the New Zealanders five-eighths. We will consider the scrum half first. His principal duties, as at present understood, are (1) to get the ball away to his outsides without delay, when his forwards get possession; (2) to frustrate as far as he can the similar efforts of his opponent at the other base of the scrum. To get the ball away in the quickest possible time it must be swept off the ground, with both hands, in *one* movement—as it comes out of the scrum. To ensure no waste of valuable fractions of a second it must not be picked up first, nor must the arms be swung back ere parting with the ball. The impetus for a long sweep has to come from the body and the back. This sweep movement is not really difficult, but to get a long throw into the fly half's hands with

accuracy and pace, requires a good deal of practice. It is, however, absolutely essential and must be acquired. The pass, it may be mentioned, should be low and hard, and should reach its destination about thigh-high (that destination, of course, being in front of the fly half).

In getting round to "swamp" the opponents, it is well to travel by the blind side, unless there be a winger who can be relied upon. It should be remembered that the ball rather than the man is the thing to be secured. The scrum half who is not good at "donkey work" will never attain to great eminence; but while he must never hesitate to stop forward rushes with his body, his position gives him grand opportunities of whipping the ball off the enemy's feet. Provided he has a lively sense of the locality of his comrade, wild passing is anathema for him. There are many cases when he may turn defence into attack not only with advantage but virtually with no risk. Under the present rules there is one little tip about putting the ball into the scrum. When his own front row *middle* man is nearer him, he should throw the ball slightly faster. This gives an opposing foot less time to do any damage. The scrum half must always let the forwards know exactly what is happening. He should tell them in a loud voice, so that all can hear, not only the side on which the ball is coming in, but the exact fraction of a second when it will arrive. Forwards have still to remember that it is vitally necessary for them to have the full force of their shove on as the ball comes in. He must wait, of course, long enough

at the side to discover which side will secure possession ; but as soon as his own men have it he must whip round behind them to be ready to speed the ball away from a clean heel. He cannot expect to get the proper sweep unless he is in proper position. This is not too near the last row, some two yards behind them is usually about right.

In throwing in from touch, the ball has to be dropped just above a *particular* forward or over the particular spot where a forward will be. It is useless, nay more, it is dangerous, to throw "there or thereabouts." Good throwing in is not easy, and requires much care and practice. There are various little wheezes of a simple character that a brainy half can work in with forwards out of touch. All they require is a complete understanding between the people who carry them out.

Personally, I am not sure whether the scrum half is not regarded too entirely as a mere connecting link in the more recent evolution of the game. I think, more especially on the blind side, he might at times be allowed to do more on his own. What with wingers and quick-breaking forwards, he has not many chances ; but a little judicious "dummy" giving might be very effective in securing an opening, and indirectly might restrain opposing forwards from getting so quickly on to the other outsides. Nowadays the scrum half has hardly to be considered from the marking point of view, for the probability of his "jinking" is practically nil. Going on his own, however, must be regarded only as an occasional alternative. It is too good a trick to be wasted.

Though their functions are different, the two halves must be at one in their understanding of each other's play. The number of little combined moves that they can bring off together—when they have a complete knowledge of each other's methods and characteristics—is legion. Think of the openings that go begging on the blind side, for lack of a little initiative or cohesion. A scrum half's duties, and for the matter of that, his comrade's also, are never done. By keen following up, by quick starting, and by ceaseless energy, he can, in defence, very frequently form that intermediate barrier I was talking of in connection with full-back play. Then, if he be backing up his fly man in attack, he will find numerous opportunities of taking a reverse pass, and for changing a hopeless position into one of attractive possibilities.

The Stand-off Half. If there be one player more than another who can truly claim to fill the most important position in a team, it is the stand-off half. He is the pivot of attack, and in a well-organised combination it is he really who decides in what direction and by what means offensive movements are to be indulged in. Perhaps the ideal position for him to stand in is right behind the scrum, at as great a distance behind as the scrum half's capacity for giving him a long-sweep pass will permit. From that coign of advantage he will be able to start movements in a way that will make it more difficult for the other side to tell the direction. As I have said, it rests with him to decide the form and the "geography" of the attack. He must see to it first of all that his

scrum half knows what is going to happen, and that the three-quarters behind him are also prepared. There is no reason why a simple code should not be used. I am not an advocate of tricky or complicated play, when more ordinary methods are likely to be equally effective; but as regards strategy in general, I am going to throw out for the fly half's consideration a most illuminating suggestion that my old master and friend, E. C. Arnold (who has done so much for Eastbourne College Rugger), has always been very insistent upon. Many years ago he used to say that if a team of grown-up men would deliberately feign to attack on one side of the field, and really do it on the other, they would beat almost any side in England. Now, with the flying man standing as far back as the scrum half can throw the ball full pitch, it is extremely difficult to bottle him, and he has room and comparative time to manœuvre and possibly to feint and go through. To quote my quondam "preceptor": "It is the business of the outer half to *break the opposing line* in the middle of the field, or where not expected (*e.g.* blind side of scrum), by feinting or dodging; and *then* to pass to a three-quarter who must come up to his shoulder as he reaches the next man. Secondly, it is the business of the three-quarters not to force the fly half forward, but to stand back also, and follow him wherever he goes, so as to be at his shoulder, when he (the half) has broken the line. This is the strategy that Martin Scott used to employ at Cambridge, and it is the game to which the New Zealanders owed so much of

their success." The half will try to work towards the weakest point of the defence, decoying his opponents away first, if he can. Naturally it will not always be possible to break the line near the scrum, but it will certainly be more likely when the movement takes place on the side least expected by the enemy. For a break-through in the centre, the "at-the-shoulder reception," mentioned just previously, is most important for keeping the progress straight.

Both halves, needless to say, must be able to kick with both feet, and they must be able to do it quickly.

I should have some difficulty if I had to decide which was the best pair I have ever seen. One is always inclined to prefer the people whose play one knows best; and as I had the good fortune to be behind Stoop and Munro for a couple of seasons, it may possibly be that I am a little prejudiced in their favour. Be this as it may, I can only say that when they were in form the most critical could desire no finer exhibitions. But then, I have played against Dicky Owen and Jones, of Wales; and their combination at its best was so utterly baffling and bewildering that really I hesitate to choose between them and the Oxford partners. Most people will agree with me that, individually, Pat Munro was the finest half of late years. There was no branch of the game in which he did not excel, and his off days were few and far between. I have alluded elsewhere to his wonderful falter. He did everything so quietly and so unobtrusively that a careless observer



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would often only appreciate his excellence by the result. Nobody could make such telling use of a short punt, and the openings he used to make for his three-quarters—well, they were the cause of many tries that stand against my name.

Stoop's fault is his lack of consistency. His true form borders at times on the miraculous. He is to be regarded in the light of a second Rotherham. He has introduced a novel strategy into London football, assimilating much solid foundation from Welsh and New Zealand example, which he has translated into language suitable for his environment.

L. M. Magee, who represented Ireland about twenty-seven times between 1895 and 1904, would have to be considered very carefully by an "every epoch" selection committee. He was a very great player indeed, and was probably about the finest half that his country has ever had the good fortune to possess.

It is terribly sad to realise that E. D. Simson, who played with Munro for Scotland, has passed away. Many fine judges prefer him to Stoop as Munro's partner. In some ways I don't think the pair could be bettered. My only objection to Simson was that he was apt to be selfish, and not to open out the game sufficiently for those behind him. He was always doing things, however, and you had to watch him exceedingly closely when he was anywhere near your line.

In defence I do not know his superior.

CHAPTER IX

ON FORWARD PLAY

By V. H. CARTWRIGHT (Former Captain of Oxford and England)

SOME time ago I picked up C. J. B. Marriott's "Rugby Football Annual" for the season 1912-18, and was much surprised to find that, though it contained various articles written by men well known in the Rugby Football world, not one single word was said about that part of the game which to me seems to be the most important of all—viz. forward play. This fact alone shows how much the game in England has changed in the last few seasons. No longer do the forwards occupy the important position they used to. The main object of the game seems to be to let the backs have the ball at almost every opportunity, with the result that the forwards have become a mere heeling machine; and are only on the field for the purpose of giving the ball to those backs. No doubt this is very pleasing to the backs, and also to those spectators who cannot or will not appreciate the beauties of well-executed scrummaging or rushing. But what a pity it is! Why cannot we get in our sides a happier blend of good forward and back

play? And what a difference it would make to England if we could! We are undoubtedly richer in class backs than we have been for many seasons past. To my mind the trouble is that forwards are very rarely, if ever, taught the game from the very beginning. Coaches at school do not seem to be instilling into the minds of the boys what a lot there is for them to learn before they deserve to be called even decent forwards. Why, I have known forwards come up to the Varsities, after having been in their school team for two or three seasons, who were absolutely ignorant of the science of forward play; and who, in many cases, did not even know how to pack properly: the very thing they ought to have been taught the first day they went on to a Rugby Football field. This should not be, so I propose in this chapter to devote myself to considering the points which a captain ought to teach his forwards in order to train them into a capable pack.

First of all we come to the formation of the scrum. About this I know there is a great diversity of opinion. Many fine players and good judges of the game consider there is only one formation—namely, three (in the front row), three (in the second row), and two (in the back row). Personally I am not of that school, and have always held that the formation which gets the best results is the “Three, Two, Three” formation, and for the reason that with this method of packing, the scrum is far more compact and solid; and all the forwards can push towards one point. I know the opponents of this formation will say: “Yes, but your two

outside men in the back row can only use one shoulder to push with." This, of course, is true, but the scrum is evenly balanced, and those two forwards have no one pushing behind them. Now if you have the three, three, two formation, the scrum cannot be evenly balanced, because though you have only one forward shoving with one shoulder, he is *not* in the back row but in the second, and consequently has another man pushing behind him. The result can only be that the back row forward is forcing the second row forward outwards towards the side of the scrum instead of towards the centre as he should be. These two diagrams will perhaps explain more easily what I mean.

(1) FRONT ROW



(2) FRONT ROW



(The 3, 2, 3 formation) (The 3, 3, 2 formation)

Which looks the more compact formation? Surely, No. 1. No. 2 looks and is bound to be lopsided. And if only for that reason I never have wavered and never shall waver in my faith in the three, two, three method. To make it a success, however, there are one or two points which must be borne in mind. First of all, the first forward up to the place where a scrum has been ordered should stand with his arms up ready for the next two to come up, and those two should go down *one on each side* of him, and not both on one side as is so often done. All three then bind together tightly

with their arms, and pack very low, a thing that is absolutely essential if you are going to have a good scrum. Remember, front row forwards, to grip each other so that you cannot be forced apart. The two outer men should bind their centre as high up as possible, but with their arms underneath his, so that he will be very slightly forward. After them come the two second row men, who are perhaps the most important in the whole pack. They should be the strongest forwards on the side, as they have to hold the scrum together, and so must also lock each other very tightly. They shove with their shoulders just under the cheeks of the front row sterns. The third row push against them in the same way. Row three should consist of the three fastest forwards available, as they, especially the two outside ones, have to head the rushes and get across the field to help their backs in attack and defence. In the scrum, the wing men should apply their weight towards the centre, not directly ahead. Well, so much for the formation of the scrum, now for getting the ball. We will suppose the half is going to put it in on the right-hand side of the scrum. First of all it is necessary for the forwards to get a *proper* shove on. Then, when the ball has left the half's hands, and is in the scrum, the centre man of the front row should sweep his left foot towards it, and the outside man on the right should follow it in with his right or outside foot, so that it is trapped between the two feet, and heeled to the back of the scrum. But the outside man must be very careful not to

sweep his foot round until the ball has passed him ; for, as the rule stands nowadays, the ball is not fairly in the scrum until it has passed a player on either side. I am sure this is the safest and best way of getting the ball, and I do not believe in the system of letting the centre man only get it or of the outside man putting up his inside foot. For, in the former case, the centre man kicks it back to the half nine times out of ten ; and in the latter the outside man is breaking the rule, as the ball has not passed him.

Supposing the ball has been obtained in the manner above described, what happens next ? Many forwards nowadays seem to think that if the front row has got the ball their duty is over, and I never saw a more flagrant case of this than in the Scotch and English match last March (1914) at Inverleith. On many occasions I noticed that when the English forwards had got the ball they stopped shoving, with the result that it came out very slovenly. And then, to make matters worse, they broke up very slowly and, with one or two exceptions, sauntered quietly about the field. What a mistake ! Why ! the forwards' duties have only just begun when they have got the ball. Not for one second must they stop pushing until the ball has been heeled cleanly to their half-back ; and then they must break up quickly and the back row get with their three-quarters so as to help them in attack or cover their mistakes. The others should follow up straight down the middle of the field ready for a pass, or for a kick across that may come at any minute from one of their wing three-

quarters. Similarly, when the opposing side has got the ball, there is still a lot of work for the forwards to do. They must again break up very quickly, and the back row must try to get among the opposing three-quarters. One at least of the others must go as hard as he can for one of the corner flags on his own goal-line in anticipation of cutting off one of the opposing wing three-quarters. The rest should fall back as quickly as possible to help their own three-quarters.

“What a lot for forwards to have to do!” I can hear some people say. So it may be: but even allowing that the forwards are doing their duty as I have just described, they are being let off more lightly than they ought to be. How often nowadays do we see a pack attacking or defending by means of the wheel? Very rarely, I’m afraid; in fact, during the whole of the season 1913–14 I only saw, in International matches, one properly executed wheel. That was by the Welsh forwards at Twickenham (a combination, by the way, that bore far more resemblance to a real good pack of forwards than any other I have seen for the past five or six seasons). The only reason I can ascribe for this is that the forwards of the present day are not being taught, or are not taking the trouble to learn, what their real part in the game is. There are many matches I can remember in which the forwards have staved off defeat simply through their being able to wheel the scrum and go down the field with the ball at their feet. If that was possible in the days when there was some system of defence in existence,

how profitable it would be nowadays when the motto of the defence too often seems to be "Discretion is the better part of valour." But instead what do we see? Forwards in their own twenty-five, and very often when their side is leading, simply scrapping for the ball and heeling it out to their backs. Surely a mistaken policy except when their side is down and they have to try every expedient to pull the game out of the fire. Well do I recall the groans of agony that Rowland Hill gave when one of the South Africans walked over the English line at Twickenham in 1913 from a pass from one of the English forwards inside his own twenty-five—and England leading by three points at the time! But the lesson seems to be a difficult one to learn, though why it should be I cannot imagine. After all is said and done, there is nothing very difficult in wheeling a scrum. If the forwards are told by their captain to get the ball and wheel, say, to the right, there are only one or two important points to remember: They must all get a good shove on, as I have said before, and secure the ball. That having been accomplished, the ball should be heeled to the right-hand man of the second row, who should keep it under his control until the wheel has been executed. Directly the ball has been placed in the custody of the second row, the outside forward on the right of the front row should shove hard to the *left*. He is the pivot of the whole movement, and for that reason must not entertain any idea of taking part in the dribbling rush that follows a wheel. When the scrum is well wheeled round, the second

row man who has the ball and the two back row men immediately behind him break away with the ball; and they in turn are backed up by the remaining man in the back row and the other second row man.

A wheel has now been executed and the forwards have broken away with a dribble. At this point the forward who has the ball at his feet must remember that he is not the only one in the movement. I have seen many excellent wheels spoiled by a forward simply trying to go through on his own, when he must have known that there were at least one or two other forwards up with him. A one-man dribble is very often quite effective, but surely when there are two or three forwards on the ball much better results can be obtained by what is known as "cross-dribbling"—*i.e.* by one forward passing the ball with his foot to the one next to him. In fact, I can remember many occasions on which a wheel would never have come off at all if the second row man, who had the ball at his feet, had not passed it at once to the outside man of the back row, who by the wheel of the scrum had been brought up alongside of him. And now the questions arise: How should forwards dribble? With what part of the foot should they control the ball? There is only one way of controlling a Rugby football when dribbling, and that is with the inside part of the foot. Never mistake "a few well-directed hacks" for dribbling; and when in rushing the ball begins to bounce, don't try to pick it up too quickly while it is near the ground.

In the last few paragraphs I have tried to point out to forwards what it is necessary for them to do in order to bring off a wheel. And now just a word or two on how they should prevent the opposing forwards who have got the ball from successfully wheeling them. The most common method of countering a wheel is for the forwards in the back rows to break up and form again on the side towards which their opponents are wheeling. This method sometimes has the desired result, but a good captain on the opposing side would seize his opportunity at once, and order his forwards to abandon the wheel and go straight through the opposition—a task that should not be a very hard one, as the scrum would have lost all its solidity and proper formation. No—the best and easiest way to stop a wheel is for the forwards who are being wheeled all to shove on to the ball. By this means their formation is not broken, but is as solid as when they first formed up.

So much for the main duties of a forward. For the rest, he must keep his eyes open and know where the ball is. He must use his head in the scrum and realise he is not a mere blind shoving machine. In the open and out of touch he must bear in mind that he is a member of a combination and should not try to do everything on his own. For instance, out of touch : if he has got the ball but cannot make much headway himself, he should at once put the ball down at the feet of the forward next to him, who will probably not be occupying the attention of the opposition so closely. Again,

a forward must always tackle low. How often do we see the results of a good dribble completely negated by the foremost forward scrapping high at the man who has picked up the ball. The remark, "Take the man with the ball and put him down hard," applies just as much to a forward as it does to the outsides; only when he tackles a man he must be sure he has got the ball, otherwise he may find himself in as awkward a predicament as did the author of this book when in a match at Richmond about twelve seasons ago—with the best intentions in the world—he tackled the finest forward I have ever seen play when he hadn't got the ball. "I'm really awfully sorry," said the author. "You will be," replied the forward!

I have often been asked the question: "Who was the finest forward you ever played with or against?" And my reply has always been the same—"John Daniell." I think that at his best he was in a class by himself, if only by reason of his incomparable knowledge of the forward game as it should be played, and of his wonderful capacity for making eight forwards, who were absolute strangers to one another before going on to the field, play together in a few minutes as if they had played side by side all their lives. But I have come across many other fine forwards in Club and International football; and I should pick out the following as being the most prominent:—A. L. Kewney (England), an untiring worker and one held in great respect in Wales, as his nickname there, "Kicking Ginger," plainly shows; A. F. Harding

(Wales), a great dribbler and a first-class front row man; A. Tedford and Joe Wallace (Ireland), two wonderful scoring forwards; Mark Morrison, "Darkie" Sivright and W. P. Scott (Scotland), each of them of the type of forward that the Scottish Union must be sighing for nowadays. All these were really great players. How they would compare with the giants of the past I do not know; but if the latter were the better men, then my only regret is that it should have fallen to my lot to have played Rugby Football in the twentieth instead of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER X

CAPTAINCY

WHICH is the best position for the captain of a side to occupy? There have been many keen arguments as to whether he should be a forward or an outside; and if the latter, whether half or three-quarters is the better situation for him.

Personally I am inclined to think, provided you have a really capable lieutenant to lead the forwards, that centre three-quarter is the best place. There he is near enough to most movements to make his voice heard and yet sufficiently far off not continually to be interfering with the directions of the scrum leader. He has a good opportunity of judging what is likely to happen, and has therefore the best chance of deciding correctly the tactics that ought to be adopted at any particular period of the game.

Paradoxical as it may appear, the great objection to a captain playing half is that he sees rather too much of what is going on forward. If he has anything of enthusiasm or keenness in him, he will be certain, when he notices something done badly, to express immediately his opinion about it; and in practice we shall find that his authority will frequently be in apparent conflict with that

of his deputy in the scrum. Anybody who knows anything about Rugger will appreciate the fact that the best can never be got out of forwards where there is anything approaching a dual authority over them. For good results to be obtained one man, and one man only, must have absolute control of the pack. I am convinced that anything an outside may have to say to forwards during actual play should rarely be otherwise than of a general character. There is another reason why it is not advisable for an outside captain too closely to be able to watch the forwards—because of the effect such watching may have on his own play. He will be apt, on occasions, just not to be in his place, and I have continually pointed out that it is the waste or gain of a yard or a fifth of a second that so often makes all the difference between success and failure.

Now, I lay it down as a general principle that the less outsides are lectured during the progress of a match the better it is from every point of view. I do not say that no directions should be given them as to policy. For instance, that touch should be found where possible and that no risks of any kind should be taken when their side is a couple of scores ahead and there are only a few more minutes to go in the most important match of the season. Or, if the position is reversed, and their own team is behind, that the most dangerous and rash movements may be justifiable in the circumstances.

Again, where a man has deliberately faked, a

few apposite remarks may have a good effect, or at anyrate may be necessary for the sake of discouraging — or encouraging — others. I maintain, however, that good outside play is very largely a matter of the confidence that each individual outside has in his own capacity on the special day. I maintain further that most footballers who have any worth or merit in them themselves are the first to realise when they have made a mistake.

This being so, the effect of dotting the "i's" and crossing the "t's" of their offence will most probably merely shake that confidence which it is so essential they should possess. There is not the same danger in lecturing a forward. He has a better and more present opportunity of redeeming his shattered reputation and of expiating his crime. If the worst comes to the worst he can always hide his diminished head in the middle of the scrum, and by honest work and by the application of his weight to the best advantage regain the position he had temporarily lost and, unabashed, be able once again to look the whole world in the face.

In addition to the greater probability of his mistake having proved more costly, the poor outside has to face the music without any nice scrum in which to shelter himself. Then, as the realisation of the full consequences of what has happened begins to eat, cancer-like, to his very marrow-bones, if the man whose words carry weight and whose opinion is valued comes up and "rubs it in," it is not really to be wondered

at that bad often becomes superlative straight away.

What makes it all the more difficult to lecture an outside to good purpose is that even the great captain will generally hit upon not only the wrong moment, but also not the right thing to talk about. What will be censured is the consequence and not the actual shortcoming.

Let us consider the history of a bad pass. We might find, if we could get a cinematograph picture of all that led up to it, that the real reason of the transfer going astray was that the passer had not been in the proper place when he received the ball, and had therefore to make some turn or movement which was just sufficient to check his stride and upset the whole of the subsequent manœuvre.

If this were the true cause, the offender ought not to be blamed so much for the bad pass as for his slackness in not having been where he ought to have been the second or two before. Even the missed tackle that looks so disgraceful need not always be attributed to cowardice. It may have been because the defender had not started quickly enough, and even where lack of "decision" was accountable for failure, advice such as to go for some portion of the opponent and grip it, instead of shutting one's eyes and groping vaguely, may be more potent in avoiding a repetition of the scandal than the choicest and most highly seasoned slanging. Where admonition is felt necessary, very rarely ought it to be administered in public. From the circumstances of an outside's position



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it will practically always be in the nature of *post obit.* censure; and the player who benefits more from a public "dressing down" on the field than from a few private words had generally better be left out of the side for the side's good.

I have spoken emphatically on the necessity of dealing very discreetly with outsiders, not with any idea of sparing their feelings when they have been in error, but because I hold strongly that the tendency to find a scapegoat for every failure is detrimental to the best interests of the game. It helps to kill initiative in the individual player.

In the case of young and inexperienced or unlearned performers they must, of course, be told what to do, and frequently how to do it, even during the course of a game. It must not be imagined that I am advocating silence as a virtue for a captain to practise extensively. But when he is "chattering" let it be helpful in character, and about immediately apposite matters. "Frothy blather" of a general description rarely does any good at all, and frequently causes people not to pay attention when really serious instructions are being given.

From experience I would recommend those who lead teams to cultivate a deep voice and an authoritative manner of speaking on the field. The best advice will not be listened to by even the most willing players—often because it cannot be heard—if it be delivered in an unconvincing treble. Shouting must never be confused with a loud and deep utterance. The former hurts the vocal chords, usually gets too high and almost always

degenerates into hysterical inconsequence when persisted in.

Short, sharp, striking sentences are the most effective, and they must be rapped out with commanding conviction. It is not too much to say that the method of delivery is almost as important as the actual matter of a captain's exhortation.

Senses, it must be remembered, are not quite normal in the excitement of the moment. Medical men will tell one that when patients are coming round after anæsthetics, it is no good talking to them in an ordinary conversational voice. The sounds will not be conveyed to their brain unless they are addressed in sharp, imperative tones. It is exactly the same with men on the football field, and they really cannot be blamed for not carrying out instructions that they do not properly hear. Apart from this "voice production," the more naturally a leader behaves towards his men the more, I am certain, he will get out of them. After all, the best encouragement and the best exhortation is that of example. If the example is of a high standard, so much the better; but the intention is the great thing. People will follow a man, though he be a most inferior player, if they realise that he knows what he wants, and is doing his own personal best to carry out his ideas. "Come on," not "Go on," is the policy that leads to victory. My conception of the ideal captain is not that of an efficient slave-driver. He wants far more from those under him than any slave-driver could extract in days of yore. He requires

his players' hearts and souls to be striving, in unison with their brains and bodies, to achieve a common end. He has not only to get the most out of them, but to get them to get the most out of themselves. He must inspire them with the confidence that will ignore the mistakes that he makes, not because they do not care, but because they will be bent on minimising the effect of any error, no matter whose fault it may be: he must make them feel that it is their job as much as his. One could go on *ad infinitum* on the ideals a captain should place before himself. Sufficient has been said to indicate the kind of relations that should exist in a well-conducted fifteen.

It is true that the really great commander is born and not made, but experience, observation, tact and, above all, transparent sincerity, will help to fashion a by no means feeble instrument. On the field what he says must be law, and while ever ready to receive suggestions, when he has made up his mind he must never argue or let himself be argued with. He must never tolerate any "back talk" when he has given a definite order. One thing a captain must guard against, both on and off the field, is being fussy, and feeling that something has to be said on every possible occasion. Apart, of course, from ordinary direction talk during play, let him exercise a little discrimination in choosing the occasions for utterance. On the subject of lecturing, I always remember a hint that was given me: "When jawing a fellow, don't give him a chance of answering you. When you do he is so busy making up excuses to justify

himself that he has no time to attend to what is being said." The personal note is often better than verbal exhortation. The man who receives a note has to read it, and if he is worth anything at all he thinks about it, and even if its contents be unpalatable at first he will eventually appreciate its cogency. The "personal note" idea, carried out perhaps once or twice a season, has a deal to say for itself. If the captain be an outside, let the scrum deputy remember that everything that has been said about captaincy applies to him. And don't let him forget that *he* must talk. The only things he will not have to concern himself with are tactics and strategy, except in so far as they affect forwards. He must see to it that the halves let the forwards know loudly and emphatically every time when and on which side the ball is coming in and when the forwards are to break. He will, of course, allow no other captain inside the scrum except himself, and will immediately stop any yapping or fighting on the part of his own men. He can slate individual forwards unhesitatingly, because not only can he do it in hot blood, but because—it is to be hoped—he will soon have an opportunity of encouraging them with well-earned praise. While he should never be afraid of talking A B C, he should try as far as possible to particularise what he is saying, so that it shall be applicable to the play at the moment. "Get the shove on" as the ball comes in; "Front row low" as the scrum forms; "Back rows, you're not pushing hard enough"; "Lock tight"—are the kind of sentences that will bear repetition, and

may do some good every scrummage. At any-rate, they are more likely to be serviceable than a parrot-like exhortation to "Go hard" or to "Play up."

Though in a sense they do not require so much leadership, it is advisable to have an outside lieutenant when the skipper is a forward. There is much work that needs someone in authority who is not in the pack.

We will now very briefly consider some of the multifarious details a captain has, or may have, to deal with.

1. There is the question what to do when the toss has been won. If there is any down-field wind, advantage *must* be taken of it in the first half. It is too risky to trust to its blowing as strongly in the last period. Why people prefer a favouring wind at the end is because they have not realised the proper significance of beginning with the whistle. That is why fortuitous aids like wind are not appreciated so fully when the muscles are fresh as when they are evincing an inclination to weariness. The art of setting the pace is one of the most important lessons that a team has to learn.

2. The plan of campaign will necessarily depend very largely on the weather. When the ground is wet and the ball likely to be greasy, outsides must be cautioned to stand nearer to each other than when conditions are more favourable. Forwards will be told to use their feet—*i.e.* to kick and rush more frequently.

3. A captain need never be afraid suddenly of

changing the whole scheme of operations. For instance, when the outsides are troubled by opposing forwards winging on the fringe of off-side it will often pay to have the ball kept in the scrum for a few minutes and to have a little honest pushing indulged in. There is nothing that tires a fast breaking-up pack so quickly as to be forced to come back to the scrum and then to be shoved backwards. Cambridge really won the Varsity match of 1912 through some straight-ahead and downright scrummaging. Again, it happens that though a side is obviously superior to the opposition, they somehow or another are not only unable to score, but keep on being pressed themselves. Ordinary methods seem doomed to come to nothing. It may then pay for a few minutes to fling caution to the wind, and, risking everything, to throw the ball about on the supposition that backers-up *will* be there to gather it. Perhaps the instruction may also be added that nobody should try to find a touch in the interim, but should endeavour to kick high for following up. Whether tactics like these are worth attempting must depend on many things. To take risks with advantage is largely a question of educated intuition. As regards risks, the only advice to give a captain is not to take them when ordinary methods are likely to be efficacious, but not to hesitate where circumstances seem to indicate their advisability. Because it does not come off is no proof that venturesomeness is not a right policy on any given occasion. All the same it is well to bear in mind that the caution as to fussiness

or anything approaching change for change's sake applies with equal force to strategy and tactics.

4. There is no greater mistake than to sacrifice the others on the altar of "star" performers. At one period of my career, on the strength of various erratic bursts, I had the misfortune to be regarded as a player of that variety, and in consequence of being consistently and indiscreetly fed I was too closely marked in most games ever to have a chance of doing anything of real service to my side. A "star" should not, of course, be starved completely or left to shiver, but to use him to the best advantage a little discrimination is necessary. Now, in order thoroughly to "shadow" him the enemy must weaken some other portion of their defence by drawing men away from their proper places. The principle of attack is to "break the chain at its weakest link." Let this policy be adhered to. Let movements be developed in that part of the field where the "weakest link" is to be found—irrespective of whether the big man will participate or not. When he is being unduly watched this will tend to bring defenders back to their normal positions, and then our friend will have a better chance of showing his true worth. It is often remarkable the number of half or quarter openings a really good performer will make—and use—for himself when he is given a chance by not being too persistently played up to.

5. A captain should make up his mind beforehand which forward will be taken out of the scrum should an outside be hurt, and what rearrange-

ments in position are necessary in the event of some such accident happening. There is one kind of injury over which special caution must be taken, and that is where there is a possibility of concussion. In other cases the unfortunate player himself, in the absence of a doctor, will probably know whether he ought to remain on the field or not. People suffering from bad heads are a terrible worry and responsibility. There is one particularly perplexing stage for the layman when it is almost impossible to tell what is the real condition. When they begin to beg and beseech to be allowed to remain on the field it is usually a sign that they are not responsible for their actions, and it may be a most difficult proceeding to get them away. Often a man insists on coming on again, and I have found, when captain under such circumstances, that the only thing to do is to stop the game, order the man off in harsh and possibly violent language—he won't listen otherwise—and not to let matters proceed till he has been put in charge of a responsible person. One must appear cruel to be kind to poor fellows in this condition, and experience teaches me that this is the only way of dealing with them.

Most of the other points that have to be dealt with by a captain are suggested elsewhere, and I will not here attempt their recapitulation.

The two greatest captains I have had the good fortune to play under were both forwards. John Daniell and V. H. Cartwright are their names. On their days they both displayed all the attributes that go to the formation of a perfect forward. It

was because of this fact that their leadership had such wonderful opportunity. "Prophet" Daniell had the power, in a quarter of an hour, of instilling more combination into a scratch eight who had never seen each other before than the ordinary person could achieve in the course of a couple of seasons' continuous play. One delighted forward after his first experience under the "Prophet" exclaimed to me: "I never knew before I had so much football in me; it seemed so easy when he was next you to do things right—and didn't he let you know it when you didn't!" I have not yet come across the forward that Daniell discouraged. I know several, however, whom he has temporarily transfigured.

Of how the "Prophet" could pull a team together we shall hear more in connection with Irish football.

In the meantime we acclaim him as "Prince of Captains."

My old friend Cartwright, who, in the generosity of his heart, has made this book noteworthy by his splendidly lucid and valuable contribution on forward play, was very little inferior to Daniell as a skipper. Perhaps he had not quite the latter's talent for transforming a scratch fifteen so rapidly into a team, but he had the same inimitable faculty of getting that something extra out of his men that causes miracles to happen. Though his lot was not cast in happy days, in many respects England cannot have had a better leader. He inspired a zeal and an enthusiasm that lasted for more than one game, and those who had once

played under him were always desirous of repeating the experiment. As the captain of a club, he was almost ideal. The way he brought Oxford on in one brief term, the way he led them against Cambridge, the personal relations he established with and between the individual players are facts which establish the calibre of the man.

Except in one match, that need not be talked about, he had the rare gift of being able to keep people at it when they were winning comfortably.

But he was at his best when matters previously had seemed hopeless. It was his superb generalship that really won the Varsity match of 1903 for Oxford, and England would certainly not have pulled off the Scottish game of 1906 but for his presence. Merely to gaze at that "presence" gave confidence; the anxious, but firm, determination shown when things weren't going well; the smiling, pleased, but still anxious expression when matters improved—but I am getting personal about one of the most popular players that ever stepped on to a football field.

CHAPTER XI

REFEREEING

THE appreciation and gratitude that Rugby players should feel to referees is unfortunately more honoured in the breach than in the observance. At the best, a referee's task is not an easy one. The very nature of his duties compels him continually to come into collision with the best intentions of one side or the other. It therefore behoves people to be especially careful not to increase his difficulties by inconsiderate action or by the display of momentary vexation.

It is well to emphasise what every player knows so well and what he so regularly seems to forget. In the first place, that the referee, like most human beings, has only two eyes; that those two eyes have no particular X-ray qualities of being able to see through masses of bone and muscle; that however active and alert he may be, he cannot be objectively cognisant of all that goes on; that however keen his brain, it can only receive a certain number of impressions at a time; that to err is human; and that the referee who really saw everything would not be divine, but a "godless terror."

In the second place, that however essential rules

may be, and however well they have been framed, an absolutely literal interpretation would reduce the game to a pure farce; that a successful interpretation follows the spirit rather than the letter of the law; that repeating any sections of the preceding paragraph that apply, in order to let the game proceed without too much whistling, a referee must use his own discretion as to the breaches he will not penalise; that in using this discretion he will be guided by what he thinks are the motives or intentions of the players concerned, by the character of the breaches, and by the possibilities of the other side getting an advantage if the game is allowed to continue; that his diagnosis of such motives, character or possibilities will often be inaccurate; and that even if he was always correct in his diagnosis the people who had offended wilfully or otherwise would be just as dissatisfied with his decisions.

One effect of play having become faster and of the instructions to referees not to blow the whistle until they see which side gets the benefit of an infringement is that there is not nearly so much shouting and claiming as was the case in former days. This is all to the good.

Really it is wonderful what an amount of incoherent comment and indiscriminate chattering even the most peaceful and law-abiding players can get through in the course of an afternoon. I always prided myself on being most peaceable and law-abiding, and I certainly never entertained any lasting resentment, even when a referee had been guilty of an obvious mistake. Occasionally,

however, I am ashamed to say, I have found myself "giving tongue" in a manner worthy of an expert magpie. It was unconscious action, but none the less reprehensible on that account. It is a practice very strongly to be condemned; for the man in charge of the game has quite enough to do without having his attention distracted by vocal efforts in parts of the field far distant from where the ball may be.

Speaking from the referee's point of view, I would repeat that he really does see very much more of the game than he ever notifies by whistling. I think it is a duty of every writer on football continually to remind players and spectators alike that the whistle ought not to stop the proceedings while there is the possibility of the non-offending side gaining an advantage out of something at variance with the rules. Frequently it requires great control over himself to prevent a referee from blowing too early, and a sudden shout may cause him instinctively to put the whistle to his lips.

One good instance of when this is very likely to happen is where a half or winger, though flagrantly off-side, has not succeeded in preventing the opposing scrum half from getting the ball away and making a very "hot" opening. The penalty for the off-side is, of course, a free-kick, but under these circumstances it may easily be a lesser punishment than to ignore the crime that has been committed. Even should a goal be scored, it only counts three points; there is the possibility of five if the method of masterly inactivity be adopted.

Referees, like players, vary from match to match. We are very apt to judge them by single decisions. This is most unfair; a man who has given three bad decisions may have made the game great by his judgment and discrimination; another who has committed no particular error may have ruined what would otherwise have been a thrilling contest. There is not much doubt that refereeing has greatly improved of late years. The present-day referee certainly keeps up with the game more closely than was the case a few years back. The increasing openness of the play has, of course, made it essential that he should do so.

The principal criticism I would venture to make is that there is not a sufficiently uniform standard of what is allowed and accepted throughout the country.

There is no escaping the fact that to standardise refereeing and to bring about the uniformity that is desirable would in practice be by no means an easy task. How far even it may be possible is open to conjecture.

Which particular "school" (if the term may be applied) of "whistlers" should have the biggest say in laying down the standard? Without a greater interchange than at present, not much could be expected from any reform, and in this connection financial considerations would have to be gone into, more especially by London clubs. There are comparatively few men also who could afford the time regularly to make long journeys all over the country. It is one thing to go from

London to Richmond or even from Gloucester to Bristol on a Saturday afternoon. It is quite another to journey from Carlisle to Portsmouth or from Plymouth to Newcastle.

Then, in the case of France, linguistical handicaps must be added. Though a remediable drawback, it is one that has undoubtedly affected many referees in their dealings with French fifteens.

Greater uniformity, however, is possible than at present exists. Why, the very rules under which the different countries play are not always absolutely identical. The Welsh and English definitions of tackling, for example, were cases in point. We hear a great deal about Royal Commissions in matters of national import. Would it not be practicable to appoint an International Commission for the purpose of co-ordinating the interpretation of the rules.

The London Society of Referees does most valuable work in this respect. By meetings and by other activities much has been done to achieve the result aimed at in the metropolitan area. Other societies have done the same work in other localities. These methods are certainly capable of expansion. The laws of the game itself and their application to actual play are not matters that should be entrusted to National Unions. They ought surely to be decided and exclusively to be controlled by a body representative of all the countries interested.

I am aware that the International Board does concern itself very anxiously with the rules despite the Anglo-Welsh discrepancy I have alluded to.

What I am suggesting is that it, or a body similarly constituted, should devote its energies to securing conformity in refereeing *practice*. An International Board of Referees might be established, but I do not think the authority who makes the laws and the one that interprets them should be entirely separate.

Few people realise what a difference there is between first-class and other grades of Rugby. It is not merely a question of lesser or greater excellence of play. The point of view of the players is so dissimilar that it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that many first and "B" team matches are as unlike as bridge and auction bridge in cards.

Where perhaps the greatest difference exists is in the way the rules are interpreted. In junior football—I am talking more particularly of London—the idea of playing right up to the whistle is only coming in gradually. The advantage to the non-offending side regulation has not yet been fully apprehended. Both sides are quite likely to stop on their own accord when an obvious forward pass or knock-on takes place, without waiting for the referee's whistle. One reason for this state of affairs is undoubtedly due to what may be described as the casualness of the refereeing. Not infrequently the only available person to take charge of the game is a chance spectator, whose knowledge of the rules more often than not is of the slightest, and some of whose decisions will possibly be of such a character that all interest and excitement is taken out of the game.



FORWARDS DRIBBLING



FORWARDS BREAKING AWAY

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To take full advantage under these circumstances of his probable incompetence and inexperience is felt to be unfair, and players have consequently got into the habit of taking matters largely into their own hands and of refraining from trying to benefit unduly through obvious breaches and mistakes. This sporting spirit does men great credit, but their action itself carries with it several unfortunate tendencies. Not only is the game unnecessarily slowed down, but really fine opportunities and openings run the risk of not being "frozen onto." As both teams acquiesce in and adopt this practice, it works pretty fairly on the whole.

The result, however, is not modern Rugby as it should be played, and a serious feature is the accentuation of the natural difference between first-class and other matches. From the refereeing point of view some interesting questions arise from this difference. Should a referee ignore, so far as may be possible, any discrepancies, and run a minor game on the same lines as he would, let us say, the Varsity match? If it were only a question of degree in football capacity the answer would be a decided "yes." As things stand, however, many considerations arise.

It would mean the insistence on what neither side understand or are accustomed to and, what is more, will not like. The pleasure they would otherwise have derived out of their afternoon's amusement will be interfered with; very possibly the run of play will be rendered more scrambling and more inconclusive.

Let us take a few of the difficulties a referee has to encounter in applying the "advantage" rule. Here let me once again implore members of lower fifteens—and others—at least to read the rules of the game. The ignorance displayed on the most elementary points is simply pitiable. A knowledge of the laws makes *such* a difference to the quality of the football.

He will find, in the first place, this colossal ignorance I have referred to. He will hear many mutterings and complaints about his incompetence in not blowing earlier for infringements. The offending side, equally with their non-offending adversaries, are not prepared to take advantage of the breach. The parties concerned will have stopped by reason of the infraction. The non-offenders will very probably be spending their time in appealing; so that they will not be in a position to profit in any event. The only course, then, will be to whistle for the original offence.

I need not dwell on the educational value of refereeing according to first-class standards and criteria. Like many other things, however, it must be done with discretion. In spite of the fact that it might not be quite so amusing to the players themselves, I think it is very essential that referees should do their best to teach and enforce comparative uniformity of method.

There are many worse ways of spending an afternoon than refereeing. It can confidently be recommended from the exercise point of view. To keep up with a fast game involves a tremendous

amount of running about. Here are one or two considerations to keep in mind during a game.

Remember that play is for the players, and that you are unselfishly helping to make it possible for them. Don't obtrude yourself into your decisions or regard it as a game *between* yourself and the players. (Those who have refereed will appreciate the need for this caution.)

Don't go on the field determined to act on set principles. Referee each game on its own merits.

Keep a judicial mind—and your temper. Never let indignation—however righteous—at whatever happens influence your conduct.

Don't argue yourself, and don't allow others to argue about your decisions—at anyrate while the game is in progress.

Where possible turn a blind eye to faults and breaches, and remember the "advantage to the other side" rule.

CHAPTER XII

TEAM SELECTION

IN these general remarks on team selection I hope it will be understood that I am attempting to make no insinuations or innuendoes applicable to any special body of men whose duty it is or has been to pick teams. My observations are entirely impersonal, and are directed towards showing some of the difficulties that all Selection Committees have to overcome and some of the tendencies they have to guard against. I do not think that people realise sufficiently the strenuous labours and the wholesale sacrifice of time that members of the International Selection Committee are subjected to. Not only have they to see innumerable matches in all parts of the country, but they have, among other duties, to estimate the merits of different players and to compare their excellencies and defects under varying circumstances and conditions, and frequently without the opportunity of seeing possible rivals for the same position face to face against each other.

After all, there are only fifteen places to be filled. Not more than eight forwards can be chosen, only one back and so on. The number of

players qualified to represent England I should not care even to guess at, and of those whose claims deserve careful consideration there is also a numerically large quantity.

If some of the things that have been said about the members of previous Selection Committees were taken seriously, one would really think they had been doing the work for personal gain, and that players had been chosen through favouritism and not because of an honest belief, whether mistaken or otherwise, in their capacity successfully to fill the particular positions. I am sure that few, if any, of these critics really intend to convey this impression, but in their anxiety not to miss a point against the selectors they allow their pens and their tongues to run away with their discretion.

I hold strongly the view that a Selection Committee deserves the heartiest congratulations on success, and equally hearty thanks when victory does not crown its labours.

It is only possible to form a judgment on facts that one knows. If the data one has to go on are insufficient for the purpose in hand, the judgment is not likely to be very valuable. This is the case with most Selection Committee critics. When one considers the thousand and one factors that English team selectors have every year to consider, it is really not surprising if they do sometimes make mistakes, and that the reason for some of their selections is not obvious at the first glance.

The mere enumeration of a few of these factors

will show the nature of the work that they have to get through. In the first place, there is the question of styles of play in various parts of the country. *Pace* one or two authorities who do not seem to think that local styles ought really to make much difference from the selection point of view, I should have thought that this was a most important problem.

It is a known fact that a native of Somerset would not understand a Yorkshire dialect, and I am certain that the analogy holds good in football. I believe that environment does play a very prominent part in the game, and that often a man does not show his true form when taken from surroundings that he is accustomed to. I would go so far as to say that out of London nearly every separate locality has a style in many ways peculiar to itself.

At a time when London football was not at its best, what did we find was the result of the trial games between London and the Varsities and the Rest of the South? The latter fifteen was drawn from clubs that in most cases would have routed—and, as a matter of fact, did rout—the teams that were represented in the metropolitan combination. They were presumably the “pick of the basket,” and were certainly not inferior footballers to their opponents. Nevertheless they did not win.

It will at once be suggested that this was due to lack of combination, but the same remark applies to the other side. Only in London and at Oxford and Cambridge do the styles at all approxi-

mate; and this, I believe, is the correct explanation of the paradox we have just been discussing. When there is a satisfactory minimum of players to select from the sooner the maximum is reached the greater is the likelihood of a good team being chosen.

It is physically impossible for a small number of people to have an intimate personal knowledge of all the good performers in a large area, and the disadvantages of a large committee are too numerous for the idea to be entertained for a minute. Now the larger the area to be dealt with the greater the temptation to form a more or less final opinion about a man's potentialities after seeing him only once or twice. One is very apt to go on the first impression alone, and it has to be remembered that the first impression is always the hardest to eradicate.

To judge a man in this way means in practice that he is sized up on a few solitary efforts. If the efforts that were noticed are good he will be given a good mark in one's mind, but if he was unhappy in what he attempted he will be labelled accordingly. Now the worst of first impressions is that they are too often superlative estimates. The class in which the player is docketed will be either very bad or very good. An exaggerated idea of his prowess or lack of ability will generally be gained.

Those entrusted with the responsibility of selection have naturally to take this possibility into account when the particular person comes up for consideration.

When choosing representative teams the selectors, no matter who they may be or however open-minded and just in their outlook, will, more or less subconsciously, be inclined to look at the players they have to see from the point of view of eliminating as many as possible. This is not a criticism or a reproach, but really the statement of what, after all, is bound to happen. It is the case, more particularly when it is a question of whether it is worth while having a second or third look at a certain player.

One must not forget that the task is not one of deciding actual merit, but the far more difficult problem that competition for a limited number of places involves. It is inevitable that player A must be considered from the point of view of whether he is a superior or less capable exponent of the art than players B and C. When a conclusion has been arrived at, one at least of the players is, unless something fresh turns up to cause a change of opinion, eliminated from further consideration.

Some process of this kind has to be adopted in order to reduce the list of "possibles" to one of "probables."

Now it might well happen that one player would be preferred for one class of game and a man of very different calibre for another. Where uncertainty exists as to the probable nature of the contest, it is quite possible that a fresh person altogether would be considered most favourably.

It is conceivable, and, as a matter of fact, has happened, that a player who would be likely to do

well against Wales would more than probably be a hopeless failure against Ireland, and at the same time might be a great success if brought in again for the Scottish match. How is a Selection Committee to deal with a problem like this? Imagine what an outcry would be raised if, after our performer had played finely against Wales, he was dropped for the next match!

What would happen if his supplanter had done brilliantly and was then passed over for the original choice who failed to show his proper form against Scotland need not be dwelt upon. Yet, if one comes to look at the matter dispassionately, it might easily be that if a committee did act in this manner, not only would they have reason on their side, but their proceedings would be perfectly consistent. The fact that our supposititious player did not come off when given a further opportunity does not affect the principle. One must assume that the chief object is to win the special match the team is got up for and, this being the case, the probabilities of that special game only should be considered.

The various countries have styles of play and characteristics of their own in much the same way as have different localities in the same country. It is possible that successfully to cope with these characteristics a change in tactics would be advisable. What, then, is there unreasonable or inconsistent in thinking that one player is more likely to shine in certain circumstances and another when circumstances are altered?

What further is there unreasonable or inconsistent in putting one's convictions into practice? Changes are always open to adverse comment when they do not happen to be successful. Few people seem to realise that there may be a much sounder basis for criticism when those in authority have not had the courage to try justifiable or necessary experiments, but have taken the easier and what perhaps seemed the safer course in adopting the *laissez-aller* attitude.

If considerations like these were more fully appreciated, we should not have so many ill-founded and hasty expressions of opinion which may do a certain amount of harm in exciting needless mistrust and suspicions. It must not be thought, from what has just been written, that I am an advocate of the policy of "chopping and changing." Far from it. I believe there should be very adequate reasons indeed, especially where combination may be affected. Carrying the point a little further, I hold as a general principle that a player's success or failure in a particular match should not be *the* factor which decides his retention in or rejection from a side. As a friend of mine once said: "You might as well 'chuck' the best bat in the England Eleven because he happened to make a duck." There is no doubt that we are all of us too much inclined to form our judgments on individual performances, and that we do not take particular circumstances sufficiently into account. No; the "one-game test" is fallacious.

There is much to be said for the suggestion that

teams should be chosen for a series of matches. I am not at all sure that in the long run the advantages would not outweigh the obvious objections and drawbacks to such a course. In practice, however, we find that this is practically what does happen in a good year. The policy of one player for one match and of another for another is rather in the light of a desperate expedient. Unfortunate necessity brought it into prominence a few seasons back, when England was enduring a period of "meagre" years. We have not heard much of it lately, since we have been coming into our own again.

It may well happen that, for the sake of greater combination, it will be far better to play men who are ignorant of the tactics of their opponents than to forgo the experience of cohesion for the experience that is the result of wider knowledge. In favour of this alternative, it has to be remembered that where men are ignorant of their opponents' play, those opponents are just as likely to have little idea of what they themselves will have to meet. It is sounder policy to try to dominate the situation by developing one's own play than to make sacrifices for the purpose of frustrating the other side's special tricks.

Football form works out in such extraordinary ways and men vary so greatly in their powers of adaptability that it is quite impossible to suggest any broad generalisations as to when combination or individual excellence should be preferred.

In picking teams the question very often arises as to the value of a fast wing three-quarter, whose

defence is not as sound as it might be. Should a player of this description be preferred to one who, though slower and less brilliant, can be depended on not to let his side down by what is euphemistically termed "hesitating" at a critical moment?

An answer of general application cannot be attempted for many and obvious reasons. The relative speed and skill of the individual players have to be considered. Special circumstances may outweigh any theoretical advantages or disadvantages that might attach to the playing of the one or the other.

The characteristics and strength of the team to be opposed, the particular needs of your own side, and whether it is incumbent to take risks, are some of the things that may have a deciding influence in the selection.

Without in the least venturing an opinion in special cases, I am inclined, in the abstract, to favour the inclusion of the fast man, provided that pace alone is not his only recommendation and that he has the capacity or instinct not only to take advantage of the openings that come his way, but to make opportunities for himself.

This proviso is important. Ability to run fast is not sufficient on the football field. It is, of course, a tremendous asset, but to be really effective it must be accompanied by something more. Perhaps the most important attribute that a wing three-quarter can possess in attack is being able to deceive the other side as to the pace he is travelling at. He must, therefore, have

good ideas on how to change his speed and on swerving in the direction least expected.

We will presume that our fast man has other qualifications and that his weakness is in defence.

Now the good sound player whose tackling and saving are above reproach, and who practically never makes a mistake, but who unfortunately has not been endowed by nature with a speedy pair of legs, labours under this great disadvantage.

Unless operations are being carried on in proximity to the enemy's goal-line he is not likely to score, however excellently he may be playing. If he breaks away from mid-field, he will almost certainly be overtaken and pulled down. Though he may do prodigies of valour in staving off attack, and may even raise the siege by judicious kicking, his lack of speed prevents his changing defence into attack by sensational runs from one end of the field to the other.

In defence also he is handicapped, though not to the same extent. While he can be relied upon to stick to anyone within reach, he may not be able to prevent his opponent from running right round him; and in going across to help the other wing he may arrive, through no fault of his own, just too late to render effective service.

The really speedy man, on the other hand, even if he "disappears" when a horrid rough person rushes straight at him, will in most cases be able to overtake and stop his opponent from behind, after he has gone through. He will be able to get to players that the other man would not have been anywhere near; and may, at anyrate,

induce them to get rid of the ball where he does not actually tackle them. He ought not to be run round without forcing the attacker to go so far out of his direction as to bring him within reach of another defender.

Even from the defensive point of view, then, the superiority of the sound player need not necessarily be of such overwhelming comparative advantage as might be supposed on first consideration. In attack, the possibilities that are opened out by the presence of a "flier" are enormous. The whole character of the game may be changed by the fact that an attacking movement is likely to be successful when it is begun near one's own goal-line.

Nothing is more disheartening to the other side than when, after strenuous effort, they have succeeded in transferring play to their opponents' quarters and are bombarding the line with attack after attack, to be driven back and possibly scored against by an individual breakaway just at the moment that they seemed bound to overcome the opposition confronting them.

Nothing, on the other hand, is more encouraging to the defending side than the feeling that at any time they may again be assuming the offensive.

In making a choice between two such players as I have mentioned, a Selection Committee might possibly be assisted in arriving at a decision by working out a little sum. Calling the fast man A and the slow man B, is A likely to score twice more than B or, rather, is he likely to get two tries that B could not obtain? On the other hand,

is B likely to save two tries that A would probably not prevent?

Taking into consideration all that has been suggested, unless A is a hopeless funk it will be found, in the larger number of cases, that on this mathematical basis of probabilities A will be up on points.

We must remember that though B may save two scores that A would not, A's superior speed may prevent a try that B, with all his dash and pluck, could not help allowing his opponents to get. We could not then put B's defensive "score" higher than one and a half, while A's attacking figures would probably pan out at the full two—the balance in the latter's favour of half a point.

In taking this sort of calculation as a very rough guide, only actual prospective scores can be placed to the relative debit and credit accounts of both players. A's weakness may possibly mean more play in his own half of the field, but this is counter-balanced by the extended field for attacking operations.

I should have preferred to have been able to urge the inclusion of the sounder player. He certainly deserves more consideration and personally, at anyrate, is in no way to blame. The other's weakness is a vicious one in the sense that it is largely his own fault and would be remedied by persistent use of will-power and intelligence.

There are comparatively few players who "funk" regularly and deliberately. If they did it would be comparatively easy to deal with them. Their failure to tackle and fall on the ball is due, in

most cases, either to ignorance of how these things ought properly to be done or to a singular hesitation in making up their minds to do the right thing at the right time.

If only a little whip could be applied to some of these gentlemen at the opportune moments it would be remarkable how much more frequently they would go in and do their duty.

It is well to remember that speed on the running track is by no means the same thing as speed on the football field. It does not follow that because a man can do something approaching ten seconds "dead" on the cinder-path that he will be able to get anywhere near that time on the heavy going of a grass field.

Not only so, but there actually is a distinct difference in the method of running. For the most part in football a twenty to thirty yards' burst is the greatest distance one is allowed to travel. The occasions during a game on which an individual player runs more than forty yards with the ball in his possession are few and far between. It is ability to get up full speed in a yard that is the thing in football.

In track running, on the other hand, even in the sprint, a relatively inferior start does not necessarily prevent all chance of victory. The finish is equally important, and there are many men who would have been in the first rank as sprinters but for the fact that they cannot apparently last more than eighty yards.

In considering your runner as a footballer, the first point, then, to find out about him is whether



J. S. RYAN RUNNING WITH BALL



J. G. WILL TAKES A DIFFICULT PASS

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he wins his races in the first or the last twenty yards. Another distinction to be remembered is that it is only in football that what may be called "strong" running makes any difference.

Though Rugby men will know what is meant by this phrase, it is somewhat difficult to explain in writing. Perhaps "firm on his pins" expresses the idea fairly accurately.

Some men seem to go over at the slightest provocation. If they are only touched they slip or are put out of their stride. Others, on the contrary, appear to have the happy knack of being able to keep going under the most adverse circumstances, and even when tackled and stopped are very difficult to bring to earth.

Physique, strange to say, has little to do with the matter; some of the strongest and most muscular people are the easiest to put over, while one often finds small but wiry performers who belong to the won't-go-down class.

The most probable explanation of this interesting difference is that strong running is a question of balance. Those who can shift the weight of their body most quickly from one leg to another will be found to be "strong."

There is no more difficult thing to judge than the pace a man is, or is capable of, travelling at. The relative speed of the other players in the special game that is being watched has to be considered. A poor Selection Committee, after all, is only human, and even the most capable is likely to make ludicrous mistakes in this matter.

Styles of running are very deceptive. Some-

one, for instance, with short, quick strides who bustles along with an air of business about him will often appear to be a regular flyer. I well remember a wing of this description. Against inferior opponents the appearance had often more than a semblance of reality about it; for he was a fine footballer who hardly ever let his side down and who was always doing the right thing at the right moment.

Unfortunately, in more important games, the "right thing" never produced tangible results. Time after time, after valiant efforts, he would be brought down just too soon. It was never his fault; it was, however, a great misfortune for his side that he was so painfully slow. It took a long time to discover this last fact, and I am sure there are many people to this day who never penetrated his disguise of pace.

There is, on the other hand, the very opposite of this style. The owner seems to cover the ground after the manner of a slow-moving beast of burden. When he has the ball it is odds on his being laid low very quickly, yet somehow or another he gets to his desired goal. Quite probably his own side were very surprised that he scored the try, and it is equally probable that they will never get over their surprise however many times he repeats this performance.

He has as clever a disguise in his own way as our other friend—and more serviceable.

To show what pitfalls are open to the unwary selector, the "firm-on-his-pins" and the "swerve-in-no-space-at-all" players will serve as the best

examples. Both will make it appear that it was not their own brilliance, but the other side's fault, that they were allowed to go on. One can overlook a great amount of slowness in a man who is "firm-on-his-pins," especially when he has also the knack of threading his way through his opponents. Pat Hancock, the Richmond and English half, was a most extraordinarily difficult fellow to tackle cleanly. One could get to him quite easily, one could even lay hands on him, but as the comforting feeling that this time, at anyrate, he would not escape was being experienced, and one gave a little "hoik" to finish the job satisfactorily, it would be discovered that it was not Hancock that was being gripped, but either earth or air.

It was the thoroughly unsound "hoik" that he was so clever in taking advantage of. No one can elude the genuine tackle.

E. J. Vivyan, the Devonport Albion International, had an almost unhuman capacity for leaving his swerve till the very last moment. He could, moreover, make it pretty well at right angles when travelling full speed, and the lightning quickness of his movements made him lost to those who hesitated for a single instant. Your only chance was to capture him the momentary fraction before he was expecting your onslaught—by no means an easy task. I am convinced that really good judges too frequently blamed the defence when he went through. It looked so simple that even they could not always appreciate the brilliance of his efforts. Incidentally it may be observed

that Vivyan ought to have been one of the greatest three-quarters the world has seen. He lacked something, however, which prevents his being placed in the gallery of "The Elect."

Personally I have always thought that a player should be judged primarily on his merits rather than on his defects. I do not, of course, mean that his weaknesses should not be very carefully considered and weighed, but that, in making up a team, excellence rather than the absence of badness should be the guiding principle of selection.

Because a man has done something execrably feeble, do not, on that account alone, dismiss him altogether from consideration, but if he has accomplished a superlatively fine coup, let that, on the other hand, be a reason for thinking of him again. In other words, eliminate constructively rather than destructively and there is a greater chance of your fifteen being established on a sound basis.

CHAPTER XIII

INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL

AT present it would seem that the various national styles of play, the Irish perhaps excepted, are in a state of flux. It is difficult to say how far the transitional tendencies are due to definite developments or to the accident of temporary conditions. As it is to Welsh football that both England and Scotland owe the greatest debt, we will consider Welsh play first. It is curious that Welshmen rarely seem able to show the form in out matches that makes them such dreaded opponents in their own country. They are peculiarly susceptible to the stimulus of their own environment, and their genius lies in being able to take full advantage of it. To play against Wales in Wales with any prospect of success, it is no good settling down to a steady "dogged as does it." The team that tries that has usually very decisively settled itself ere the first lap has been completed. In former days the half-mile race was considered in the category of a long-distance event; now, judging from the times, it is thought of rather in the light of an extended sprint. It is as a very extended sprint that a game at Cardiff or at Swansea must be played. It is not an easy thing to do; for,

unlike opponents on a racing track, the other side will be having a great deal to say in the matter. The grounds are quite different to any one meets elsewhere; so also are the crowds. The Cardiff ground more particularly can be a real terror; and it has this singular idiosyncrasy: it only shows its very worst qualities to a visiting side. I have played there when not a member of the English team seemed able to get a foothold of any sort; and yet our friends, the Welshmen, were frolicking—well, that's hardly the right word—they were raiding our goal-line preserves with an insatiable and, as it seemed to us, a disgusting greediness that even a hard ground and dry ball would not have justified.

The mechanical accuracy and precision of a great Welsh team are on occasions so perfect that people are apt to be misled as to the real reasons of its efficacy. They are inclined to attribute too great an importance to the passing itself; instead of perceiving that it is because the openings ere the passes are delivered have been so beautifully carried out that success has been rendered possible. By careful watching it was possible to get a fairly definite idea of New Zealand strategy outside the scrum; and to find out more precisely the point in a movement where the defence was primarily broken down. After that it would be easy to realise that the pass from which the try was actually scored was in a sense merely a detail—however important in the finishing touches; that it was not the vital factor that decided the question of failure or success. One might

almost compare Welsh and New Zealand methods to the driving styles of Vardon and Taylor in golf.

Vardon's action is so supremely easy and graceful that it requires, I imagine, a very intimate knowledge of the game precisely to realise how he does it; and to appreciate the fact that even such a swing can be divided into component parts. It is not making an invidious comparison to say that Taylor's manner of hitting the ball an equally long distance is not such an artistic effort as that of his great protagonist. The force of the blow is not disguised in the same poetry of motion. Even the uninitiated, if they watch with sufficient attention, can see the tremendous power that Taylor brings into play, just at the moment when the club-head meets the ball. At anyrate they can follow the difference in the pace at which the club is travelling at the top of, and further on, or rather lower down, in the swing. Apart from enticing the opposition so frequently on to a wrong tack, the best Welsh players have a wonderful appreciation of the minimum amount of action necessary to put a defender temporarily out of service. It is this almost instinctive knowledge that enables them to pass so frequently to such good purpose. With their precision, that the weight of an opponent was merely on the wrong foot would often be quite sufficient. As regards their formation in attack, I can speak from experience on the position of the fly half. I know he stood far back behind the scrum; for even when one had not been deceived as to his direction, one had always

to travel some distance to get near him, even when right up for defence.

It has been urged against the Welsh game that the forwards are used too much as a machine for getting the ball, and for heeling it out to the backs. There is some force in this criticism. They have virtually given up such methods as wheeling—one of the features that made those Newport teams of the early nineties so famous. But it has to be remembered that good Welsh forwards, as soon as they are out of the tight, are to all intents and purposes eight additional outsides.

Their packs have frequently been very much underrated. The reason for this is that the Welsh system has tended to subordinate prowess in the scrum to the feeding of outside attack. What changes the scythe of Father Time brings about! At present it is the Welsh forwards who dominate the situation. This was well exemplified in the Anglo-Welsh match of 1914. In that game, for long periods at a stretch, England never saw the ball at all. So long as the Welsh pack had it in their keeping there was only one side in the picture. It was when they had it out that victory dribbled from the Celtic grasp. Fancy Wales being forced to rely exclusively on her forwards! O shades of Gould, Gwynn Nicholls, and other heroes of the unprehistoric past! Can you imagine your country right on top, and you yourselves with opening after opening thrown at your heads, living for the better part of a second half on a four-point lead, and being confined to touch-finding—*kicking* to touch, mark you—as your only sure method of

attack!! It is true that Welsh outside play improved enormously in the subsequent matches of the season; and that Wales was blessed with about as fine a set of forwards as has ever represented her. An eight which apart from knowing how to secure the best position for hooking remembered the grand old truth, that *the* way to get the ball is to obtain the first shove by genuine hard work. How far this forward excellence is likely to alter the characteristics of Welsh football remains to be seen. Welshmen are too clever and too thorough in their methods to allow the comparative inferiority of the outsides to become a permanency.

The traditional feature of Scottish play has been the magnificent rushing capacity of the forwards. The way Scotsmen come down the field with the ball at their feet is awe-inspiring, especially when you happen to be one of the backs that is being approached. There is no more terrible ordeal in football than saving from Scottish forwards when their blood is up. I make no charge against my friends from the north of wilful brutality. The somewhat unenviable notoriety they have gained has not been altogether merited. I am afraid there have been some black sheep, but for the very large part they have too great an appreciation of the spirit of the game to desire to kick the man in preference to the ball. Their objective is always the ball; but in their striving after that objective they will allow nothing to come in their way. If a body does obtrude itself, so much the worse for that body. That is the way they look

at it—and it is a point of view that requires modification. When playing against Scotland, it is well to bear in mind the hint about falling *in front* and not *on* the ball. It is because people do not think of this regularly that they are so frequently “tickled” in the ribs by red-stockinged feet. Little weakness can generally be found in a Scottish defence, and Scotland in consequence is always a difficult side to beat. But rarely have they lacked the services of class backs, and these have been of such a calibre as to modify the national tendency inculcated by the schools to rely almost exclusively on forwards. They have been very fortunate in commanding the services of Anglo-Scots, who from their experience in the south, more particularly at the Varsities, have acquired just that additional something which has resulted in the best Scotch strategy hitting off the mean between outside and forward play predominance.

A change, however, appears to be coming over the Scottish game. The fashion to think entirely of outside attack is spreading over the border; and temporarily, at anyrate, it has been accompanied by a falling off in the rushing capacity, in the scrummaging, in the wheeling, and, in fact, in forward play generally. It is inevitable that in the evolution of a game the strategy will alter; but that is no reason why the better parts of the old tactics should not be retained to the full. Change is not an end in itself; it is only valuable when something additional can be gained. Have a more definite conception of attack most certainly, but do not let it be at the expense of your oppor-

tunism or of those splendid features that have won you such renown, is the advice I would very humbly offer to Scottish footballers.

It is pleasing to record the fact that English football once again is on the upward grade. I am confident that we have not yet seen the full extent of the revival. One reason why England had to endure a lengthy period of misfortune was that she had no distinctive style of her own. She copied various features that she saw Welsh teams bringing out successfully, without understanding their real object. There was no cohesion in her play, and the result was that much individual excellence was wasted. So relentlessly did Fate humble her in the dust that her players began to feel that they had performed quite creditably if they avoided a bad thrashing at the hands of other countries. This led them to consider any score they might happen to make as a pleasing but merely incidental stroke of good luck. We were in a condition in which we had shed our best traditions of defence, and we shrank from the risks of whole-hearted aggression. In the end we did nothing at all. Now if we had really laid ourselves out for defence, matters might not have been quite so bad. In those troublous times, however, it was the English system of defence that was so hopeless; perhaps one ought rather to say there was no system. The forwards frequently were badly at fault. With brilliant exceptions, they rarely thought of racing back to help their outsides. At the same time, when they did get possession of the ball, they had sufficiently imbibed ideas of heeling to

have forgotten the older methods of how to use it themselves. But they had not appreciated the importance of quickness, and that there must be no hanging in the back row, if heeling is to be effective. And then the backs were not in position to take advantage of any openings that might come their way. It is a relief to turn to the more pleasing conditions of the present day.

We have now learnt method, and are also working towards a distinctive style. We are beginning to understand that breaking through in the centre does not necessarily entail the starvation of the wings. We now set out definitely to attack; and this, at anyrate, makes it possible for us to do so with effect. The forwards have developed ideas of their own as regards their function in the loose. And in consequence we see rushes, worthy of Irishmen and Scotsmen, and occasionally hand-to-hand passing, that would not disgrace the men of Wales. What is at present lacking is a knowledge of the more purely scrum aspects of forward play. When we have relearnt the lesson of wheeling, and have no hesitation in putting in a little straight-ahead shoving, then I think that as regards policy we shall not have to worry much more. New developments doubtless will come, but for the present we can leave them alone to take care of themselves; they are, if they exist, too vague and too nebulous to demand immediate consideration.

An Irish pack, when it is in form, is an incomprehensible phenomenon. The units composing it turn up in the most unexpected parts of the

field at the most inopportune moments. Often it seems as if they had sprung from space.

It is obvious that they could not have been anywhere near the preceding scrum, for they could not have travelled such a distance away from it in so short a time. Yet, strangely enough, your own forwards had all their work cut out to hold that particular scrum.

If you are an outside you will almost certainly come to the conclusion that your front division is to be blamed. You will feel that if they had been shoving even half their weight, it would have been impossible for so many Irishmen to have been winging; and not only to have broken up that nice little piece of combination you were engaged in; but actually themselves to go off with a most brilliant rush that the fates alone prevented from culminating in a try.

If, however, you happen to be a forward, you will know how unjust, how idiotic, and how worthless such a criticism really is. Though you will admit that the scrum was not exactly comfortable, it was not because you were not putting in every ounce you had in you that the Irish forwards were not made to retreat. You will say that as a matter of fact your opponents were all working as hard as you were, with the exception of a single winger, who was a horrible nuisance to you and who therefore could not have been very far away from the scrum.

The real fault, of course, was the slowness of the outsides. And if the Selection Committee will give places to inferior cart-horses, whose ideas

on passing are so rudimentary, it is only natural that speedy forwards will be on the top of them while they are muddling through their ponderous evolutions.

After the game is over, whether an outside or a forward, the keen resentment you entertained against your own people will be greatly modified. Things will have happened that cannot be accounted for by their bad play, but which must have been due to the uncanny ubiquity of the Irishmen.

The more you think of it, the more at a loss you will be to account for the ubiquity, and to explain how they seem able to be in two or more places at the same time. What will make it all the more remarkable is that their efforts are rarely individual. The Irish forward does not hunt by himself; there are always two, three, or four of him together. It is the combination that makes him so deadly.

The mystery of Irish forward play, in all probability, will never satisfactorily be cleared up. I am not at all certain that the Irishmen know how they do it themselves. Like so many things connected with the "Celtic fringe," it partakes of the supernatural; it baffles, at anyrate, a solution with ink on paper.

I am aware that some of my readers will think that I have drawn a grossly exaggerated picture. What I have attempted to describe are the feelings and sensations of people who have played against a first-class Irish team on the top of its form; and I am confident that the large majority of those who have had such an experience would not only

confirm what I have written, but would be quite prepared to make additions of their own.

Apart from this "springing from space" faculty, opponents will generally have cause to remember other features of Irish forward play. Their rushes are unlike anything of the kind that is to be met with elsewhere in the United Kingdom. It is not only the pace at which it is done, and the dash of those taking part, but the control under which the ball is kept which is so splendid.

With the greatest possible respect and admiration for Scottish rushes, I would give the palm to Ireland. I think that against the best defence the latter are more likely to get further. They do not rely in quite the same way on sweeping right through the opposition, but tend rather to steer the ball in such a manner that the defenders cannot get at it at all.

If you really take your courage in both hands, and are willing to take the risk of bodily injury, you will generally have a prospect of saving from Scotsmen. They work the ball at a much greater distance from their feet than do the men of the sister isle.

Kicking off the ball is not a characteristic of Irish forwards. Their way, however, of getting rid of obstacles is equally efficacious. They pick up their man, pull him out straight so that the ball drops to the ground, and then discard him and go off. These various operations are performed at lightning speed, and scarcely check the onward progress. It takes a great deal of cunning and experience successfully to avoid such undignified

treatment and at the same time not to let down your side.

I have been dealing so far with the merits of Irish forwards; and it is not too much to say that their best packs will, for a certain period of the game, upset the finest attack it is possible to imagine. Such hurricane methods are naturally very exhausting physically; and in a really strenuous contest they are apt to crack towards the finish, simply and solely because they have played themselves to a standstill.

It is then that a capable opposition which has come "head-whole" and calm through the storm, may get their opportunity. It must not be thought that they will have an easy job in prospect. No nation possesses better defensive outsides than Ireland. If their powers for offence were in any way commensurable, I should back the "green jerseyed" fifteen every time.

It may be assumed, then, that at some period of the game a good Irish pack will succeed in upsetting and disorganising their opponents. Whether the upset degenerates into a rout, or whether it is only temporary, naturally depends on the prowess and spirit of the players they have to meet.

It is in such circumstances that a great forward leader is invaluable to the opposition. I do not think there could be a finer example of what is really meant by leadership than the way in which Daniell pulled the English forwards together in the England and Ireland match of 1902 at Leicester.

The conditions were not favourable to fast play.



STOPPING A RUSH



AN INTERCEPTED RUSH

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There had been a lot of frost, and snow was falling during the greater part of the game. The going was very slippery, and if you overran the ball, which often was unavoidable, there was little prospect of your recovering yourself. We rather more than held our own during the first half, and it was not till we had changed ends that the Irishmen found their proper game.

When they had made the "discovery," they worked it for all they knew. Personally, I have never had more thrilling experiences than in helping to keep them out. For the next ten minutes it was certainly not a case of Saxon oppression. We stuck to our guns—or rather to the ball, and nearly incurred a penalty under the posts in consequence—but it was with the desperation of despair.

Another few minutes and we should have been a rabble, beaten, baffled and bewildered. It was then that the "Prophet" showed the qualities for which he was renowned. Addressing a few terse but forcible sentences to his forwards, in a manner particularly electrical and particularly his own, he went down in the middle of the front row. Getting the ball and gripping firmly the men on either side of him, he went straight ahead.

Those behind responded nobly to his call, and before the Irishmen realised what was happening a good twenty-five yards had been gained by honest, straightforward shoving. Another scrum or two and the English were themselves again. We won the match; and if ever a single man won a victory

off his own bat that man was Daniell that afternoon.

Incidentally, our being able to go through them as we did showed up a weakness of Irish forward play. It must not be imagined, however, that persistent, straight pushing will always succeed against them. They are far too clever, too quick, and too versatile for that. Very possibly, they will not attempt to meet such tactics by returning the compliment, but will endeavour to alter their opponents' direction, so that instead of their shoving ahead parallel to the touch-lines, they will be working the ball at right angles to them.

If they succeed in this they will often make a fine opening for themselves. The scrum will be in very loose formation by then, and one of the other side may very possibly kick the ball just too hard. They will be there to pounce on it and go off with one of their own rushes, leaving the opposition forwards hopelessly stranded to the side of them.

Naturally, it will not often happen that they can turn the scrum round so far as I have suggested, though, as a matter of fact, I have seen them bring off the coup on more than one occasion. Straight shoving against an Irish pack undoubtedly pays, but unless your pack is greatly the superior, they will rarely allow you to tire them out in this fashion.

When one comes to think of it, it is not so very remarkable that the New Zealanders found the Irish team too much for them during the greater part of their game with Ireland. They were face

to face with something of which they had had no previous experience; and from all accounts the home team gave them a gruelling they are not likely to forget.

It speaks volumes, not only for their confidence in their defensive powers, but also for the generalship which secured for them such a remarkable record, that the New Zealanders had the courage regularly to let Ireland have the ball for a time. This particularly clever piece of strategy apparently won them the match.

The Irishmen fell into the trap; finding the ball in their possession, they gave up the distinctive characteristics of their play, and heeled it to their outsides. With ordinary methods against them, the New Zealanders were able to assert their superiority; and seizing their opportunities, they retained their then unbeaten certificate. It is hard to imagine any other team thinking of such an expedient, far less of putting it into actual practice.

Apart from their capacity and skill, the spirit in which the Irish play the game is wholly delightful. Their methods are always clean and above-board, and I do not think that roughness ever can be seriously urged against them. No teams will tackle you harder or go for you more fiercely. Hard and keen play, however, is a very different thing from roughness; and when an Irishman treats you with particular severity, it is not with the view of hurting you, but with the perfectly legitimate object of doing his duty conscientiously and expeditiously.

In only one respect have I noticed any marked departure from the best traditions of the game. Irish forwards are at times rather fond of getting into their opponents' scrum, when it is forming and as it is breaking up. It is all well and good to interfere with the other side from the front; but there is no excuse for doing it from behind or when the player is just not on-side.

I mention this little blemish with some diffidence, and only because I feel it is a pity that such splendid sportsmanship should have attached to it even the smallest basis for criticism.

CHAPTER XIV

ON CLUB FOOTBALL

THE beginning of this chapter affords a convenient opportunity for discussing the relative positions of International and Club football. Which of the two is more important? Or, rather, if it comes to the point, how much should Club footer concede in order to promote International prospects?

It is a very difficult question to decide, and I am not quite sure whether a little indefiniteness in the matter does not, in the long run, lead to the least friction. Why I have raised the subject is because quite a number of people do not seem to realise that there are any arguments by which the Club point of view can be supported; and they regard any action that might possibly have a detrimental effect on our International fortunes as necessarily inspired by a narrow, selfish and parochial outlook.

The International, of course, looms larger in the public imagination. It appeals for one thing to those sentiments and emotions which are implied in the connotation of "patriotism." Let us just see what it involves.

Now, in order to weld the component parts into something that is worthy to be considered as a

“combination,” practice is essential; and that can only be secured by the probable players being selected as early in the season as possible, and by their being continually brought together in trial games and by other methods. So far so good. But what do these trial games entail? They mean that certain clubs will be deprived of those who are necessarily their best players for quite a large number of weeks. Those who can get off on ordinary weekdays are a small percentage. Broadly speaking, the Varsities and, perhaps, the Services are the only clubs who can be more or less certain of turning out their best teams on any other day but Saturday. Saturday afternoon, then, is the only time to be considered from either the International or Club point of view. The more International exigencies in the shape of trial games prevail, the more other football is cut into.

Hitherto a *modus vivendi* has been arrived at with very little complaint or reason for dissatisfaction; but it is a moot point whether any enlarging of the national demand would really be in the best interests of the game.

Any club secretary will tell you that the effect of trial games is much greater than the mere absence of the players engaged. They tend to upset the card in many ways, and the upsetting influence on combination is by no means the least. A keen International Selection Committee is very rightly anxious to do its best to see that England's choices get every opportunity that is possible of playing together.

With this object they request clubs to play men

who are members of other clubs. This works hardly on Club football in two ways: one club loses the services of, say, its best performer; and another has to exclude a regular member to make room for the casual new-comer. This will be looked on as merely a "rub of the green" if it be for one match only; but any extension of the idea—as when the "alien" is wanted to be played for two or three weeks on end—however advantageous to England, is distinctly detrimental to the clubs.

The question involved is one of principle, and concerns, as I have said, the relations of the two great branches of the game, the International and the Club. Should a club object either to the temporary emigration or immigration of a player or players, I do not think it should necessarily be blamed, any more than one would think of censuring the English Selection Committee for doing what it conceives to be its duty.

But, going a little deeper, we can apply a test. Which is the more essential to the game? The only reply is that the club "department" is an easy winner; and that really International contests are only an adjunct, however glorious. We can imagine Rugger going along very prosperously without Internationals. It would practically cease if the Club system were not in vogue. The one is the very life breath; the other, a pleasing and a most advantageous addition and asset. Honours and renown are things we all desire. We know that the world's opinion of our prowess is largely formed on the showy and spectacular demonstration of that prowess. England's position in the

International field is, of course, highly important—but we must not forget our foundations.

I would suggest that the real thing that matters in football is not which country wins the International championship, nor even which clubs have the most powerful fifteens, but the number and condition of the junior teams. I submit that an organisation which can turn out regularly every Saturday five decent fifteens is a greater asset to the game, and in a more prosperous position itself, than one which sacrifices everything to the building up of a single side, even if they succeed in making that one the most brilliant in the world. The quantity and the quality of junior teams have not hitherto received the care and the attention of football administrators that has been so wholeheartedly lavished on Internationals, county games, and first-class club affairs.

Except those actually concerned, how many members of a club mind very much one way or the other whether the "D" team has won or lost their game? They do, however, pay attention to the result of their First fifteen match. Why I believe the future of Rugger is so hopeful is because of the large increase that is taking place in the population of the lower-team world. To ensure the redemption of the future's promise, we need to work hard for the improvement in the standard of play of the junior combinations.

The time is ripe, nay more than ripe, for extending the sphere of our interest. Much junior team play is so woefully bad that the players cannot possibly get the enjoyment or even the exercise

that would make them take an ever so much keener interest in the game. The great raising of the standard of excellence that has been such a marked feature of recent years in London has not percolated down so far as we should desire. But much of the footer is in just that stage when a "little more" would make all the difference. The Rugby Union is not a body that has been strong in taking the initiative, and in this particular matter they will probably render more valuable assistance as supporters rather than as movers.

It is "up to" the clubs themselves to do the right thing by their lower teams. A little more personal intimacy between the first and the "C"; a little more interest—of a non-patronising nature—shown by the better players in the doings of their less competent brothers; and, above all, a little coaching, even if it only amounted to a few words of advice, would have some quite astonishing results. Much of the most atrocious football is due to no worse a crime than ignorance. The observation of a few axiomatic precepts would greatly strengthen the football armour of junior team players.

It must not be thought that I am attempting to belittle the International aspect of affairs.

What I am attempting to suggest is that those affairs will not be really healthy unless they are the culmination of a surely built edifice. A beautiful façade or a magnificent front must delight all who appreciate architecture. That delight, however, will be enhanced by the knowledge that the front is not a mere stucco erection that hides a

mass of rubble or of crumbling brick. The International is the outside of the football cup. Keep it brilliantly polished, by all means—but let the inside be spotless also.

On the question of club management this lack of association between the First and the other fifteens is serious. In some clubs I know the various teams are practically separate organisations. To such an extent has this aloofness been carried that occasionally those running a lower side would keep a “find” to themselves, for fear he would be drafted into a higher fifteen and be lost permanently by those who had brought the player to light. Such instances, it is to be hoped, are few and far between.

Too many clubs do not sufficiently consider their junior teams as recruiting grounds for the First. It is often a very great temptation to secure an outsider of known reputation for a big match, and to play him to the exclusion of a less capable but regular “A” fifteen member. There can be no question but that this policy is fatal to the permanent well-being of the body that adopts it. The price of a few good wins obtained by such means will be a very heavy one.

In most clubs the most important man is the honorary secretary—or secretaries. Committees may ordain all manner of things; they may select fabulous quantities of reserves, but it is the secretariat that has eventually to see to everything, and very often to gather in from the highways and by-ways countless substitutes on the Saturday morning. When teams turn out short it is he

who gets all the blame ; and few people seem to consider for a moment the amount of hard work he has to get through, or the tact and persistence he has continually to exercise. There are various little ways in which men can relieve him of some of his most troublesome duties. Every player, for instance, can reply *at once* and regularly to the card asking him to play. It makes an enormous difference to the prospects of full teams for one thing. A good secretary is a priceless asset. The way to retain him is to make his path as smooth as possible. My own club, the Old Merchant Taylors, owes its present position and its marvellous *esprit de corps* very largely to the splendid energies of the secretaries it has always been blessed with. In H. B. Hays we have had more than a remarkable administrator of affairs. He has been to the Old Boys what Rowland Hill has been to Rugby football generally. With everything that he has done, however, Hays has never allowed the club to become a "one-man" show. He has imbued all with the spirit that they also must give tangible evidence of their keenness. It is this supreme faculty of getting others to share his own zeal which makes a secretary's work of permanent value, and which raises up a tradition that will persist long after his retirement.

The years of indifference and of comparative insignificance from which London football is now emerging synchronise very roughly with the lean period of English International football.

The average play in the metropolis is higher now than ever it has been, and the improvement is not

confined to a few of the well-known clubs, but is noticeable all round.

This is particularly welcome. For selecting International sides it was doubtless excellent to be able to rely only on Blackheath and Richmond ; but from the point of view of the welfare of the game, the present state of affairs is much more healthy and encouraging. We are now beginning to take to heart some of the lessons that Wales and the great touring teams had to teach us. We appear to have developed a keenness which has expressed itself in a fitness and in a capacity for finishing off attacks that would have been looked for in vain in the same teams a few years back.

So much has been written about the Harlequins and their captain that one hesitates to add anything to the volume. That London football is awakening, however, is largely due to the trumpet blasts of Stoop and his confrères. They have given just the necessary object-lesson in the possibilities of outside play, and have demonstrated by actual example that clever, score-full tactics can be adopted in London as effectively as elsewhere in the United Kingdom. To show how greatly the position of London has changed in the football world, I will relate a conversation I recently had with an old West-country International whose experience makes his opinion of particular value. Said my friend : " When London teams used formerly to come down West to play us we were glad, because we had clean sporting games with them, and we felt we were doing them good from the football point of view. Now we

welcome the best of them for another reason. They can teach us something about the game." And I am not sure that he is very far wrong, though we certainly can reciprocate as regards the learning. Western teams, for the moment, are perhaps not quite so strong as they were *circa* 1900. But that metropolitan teams can now fight them on terms more approaching equality is because we have come on, not because they have gone off. We have learnt not to be afraid to try to score, and they cannot therefore devote *all* their energies to attack. Where I do think we may be able to teach our Western comrades something, is that solid straight-ahead play well carried out is more efficacious as a regular stand-by than tricks, however clever. London clubs have probably seen the best of Western football—though in the past they have had to pay dearly for the pleasure. When it is a question of "Greek meeting Greek" in the West, they are often too timid of each other to indulge in real open play. They are apt to concentrate too much attention on such matters as the loose head. One side begins, the other feels bound to follow suit—and good-bye to the best football.

Why the big provincial teams are so consistently powerful is due to the remarkable strength of their reserve forces. When I first began playing out of London, there used to be a little joke current that one hoped their best team would be playing for the home side, as any substitutes would be just as good players, only much more unscrupulous in their methods. The gates in the North are

not of their old size, nor have the clubs recovered from the blow that Northern Unionism gave them. And yet our game is more firmly rooted in the North than it has been for a generation. The talk of its dying out no longer is heard, as was the case only a few years back. The clubs that do exist are for the most part in sound condition. They are certainly not struggling for their lives. What they have lost to Soccer in spectators they are now making up in keenness. The standard of play in the North wants not so much improving as enlivening. There is just the suspicion of a "groovey" tendency. While the question of professionalism was raging, their hands were tied; but I am not at all sure that the Rugby Union could not nowadays assist more actively those clubs especially who have kept the flag flying in more or less isolated grandeur. One of their great difficulties is to secure good outside games. In a matter like this they need and deserve help.

Local feeling has always been more pronounced in the North and West than around London. That is the reason why county football still flourishes outside the metropolis. In the North it has been the salvation of the game, and the contests between such old opponents as Lancashire and Yorkshire still arouse enthusiasm.

I wish I had space for the discussion of some of the problems that county football is confronted with.

CHAPTER XV

VARSITY FOOTBALL

QUITE apart from actual "crops," it takes apparently a strong person to stand the strain of a Varsity match. Few seem to emerge unscathed from the tussle, and the number of those placed temporarily *hors de combat* can only be realised when one glances at the composition of the Oxford and Cambridge fifteens when they are subsequently on tour. Often not more than eight or nine Blues are playing. People never know how much buffeting they receive at Queen's Club till sundry bumps, bruises and lamenesses begin to make their appearance a day or two after the game. An International is nothing to it. It is the continuous ding-dong that causes the strain of the Varsity match, and makes it the most glorious of all contests to take part in. There is a peculiar paradox about the meeting; in no other game is the feeling among the players so pronouncedly in favour of being on the not-fancied side. Strong favourites invariably start with a handicap, which is the more oppressive because the cause is not only intangible but unreasonable. Prospective success, it would seem, is harder to contend against than its opposite, where nerves need bracing up for a big occasion.

And it is a big occasion, not only for present Blues, but for every normally minded person connected with either Varsity. That it is a friendly fight, fought out in the hardest but the best spirit, and that the result, whichever way it may be, leaves no bitter rankling, adds to, rather than detracts from, the zest and keenness of all both actively and vicariously concerned.

An International Cap is, of course, a higher football honour than a Blue ; but from the University point of view there is no question as to which would be—and often has been—put first. To play for one's country is regarded more in the light of an individual distinction. To play at Queen's Club is primarily a duty one owes one's Varsity, if one is fortunate enough to be selected. The pangs, pains and pleasures of playing for, and getting, a Blue are felt more deeply, and are comparable with no other sensations in the whole world of sport. I except not even playing for one's school. When it is realised how the players regard the game, it will more readily be understood why many of them are so often much above or much below their ordinary form. When a side that ought to win does come up to expectation, they will most probably exceed the hopes of their most ardent supporters, as did Oxford in 1909, and Cambridge ten years previously. The Light Blue pack of 1899 was one of the finest in the history of the game. I should like to have seen them up against the 1912-1913 South Africans. I believe they would have been able to hold our touring friends, even in physique. They comprised six

present Internationals, and the other two were "capped" later. The most remarkable incident in the match followed one of Oxford's well-nigh solitary visits to their opponents' twenty-five. Cambridge decided to shove them away. They did so, and, pushing straight ahead, they soon had their poor enemy on the backward march; the walk developed into a run and then a rout, and ere it stopped the Oxford twenty-five line had been reached and crossed! This, I imagine, is the record shove. It's a true story.

From Oxford's point of view the 1903 game forms the subject of a more pleasing narrative. Cambridge were deservedly hot favourites. I don't think a single member of our side, till play had been in progress ten minutes or so, entertained the slightest hope of an Oxford triumph.

One rather disconcerting contretemps had happened in the early morning of the day. Some benighted person discovered a weighing machine and suggested our making use of it. We did. There was nothing untoward while the outsides were being weighed, but the first forward could only touch the scale at 10 stone 3 lb. It was a horrible shock to find that three of the pack were under 11 stone, that another was only just over, and that of the supposed heavy brigade two were well under 12 stone. Our skipper, Cartwright, was the one forward whose weight was anywhere near our estimate. We tried to make light of the ominous figures by telling ourselves that breakfast, some clothes, and the advent of the afternoon would set matters right, but our cheerfulness was

a sorry affair. The knowledge that the "Tab" pack was an exceptionally heavy one could not be effaced. And when later we saw those bulky forms (I think their striped vests and white knickers accentuated the size of the men of Cambridge), well, we felt that a dogged death was the only method by which we could uphold the honour of our University.

Our opponents started off in the style that presages victory; and our early responses were feeble in the extreme. Still they did not score; and then a change came over the game. I cannot here detail the history of subsequent proceedings. Suffice to say it was not we who were flattered by the result. Our forwards must certainly have been the lightest that ever represented either Varsity. They gave a magnificent exhibition, and when they began occasionally to shove the enemy about the field, the sight was too much for the outsides. At times we went "mad" in a body; and apart from the tries we did gain, it was bad luck that success did not follow some of our other efforts. Stoop and Munro at half remained "mad" throughout; and on that day's play they are in my World fifteen every time. I have already spoken about Cartwright's leadership on that occasion.

I know the many reasons why the date of the Varsity Match should not be altered. Nevertheless it is a pity that it should be played in December. For one thing, the finish at Queen's Club is nearly always played in darkness: rarely is the other side of the ground wholly visible during the last

quarter of an hour. Keen vision, therefore, or rather that special variety of sight for which cats are famous, should be a very particular consideration for captains and Varsity selection committees to go into when deciding the teams. It is really dangerous to take the field with a short-sighted performer. Disaster nearly befell Oxford one year on this account. No blame to the man, who was well worth his place, and who under ordinary football conditions was not handicapped by his eyesight. But when darkness supervenes, after mud has dyed the men of Cambridge a piebald brown, and the costume of their antagonists to a brownv-blue, it is difficult to tell exactly what is going on.

Considering that they recruit from practically the same sources, it is strange that there has been a distinct difference in the style of football played by Oxford and Cambridge during this century. Oxford appear to have grasped more readily the principles of the four three-quarter game; and at their best our methods have approximated more nearly to those of a great Welsh side than any I have seen elsewhere in the United Kingdom. Except that the forwards did more shoving then, there is little change now from the tactics in the early portion of the period. We have always endeavoured to use our attacking capacity to its full extent; we have never been afraid of throwing the ball about, and it may be said without much fear of contradiction that we have frequently attained a more polished and a more scientific standard of excellence than our rivals. In recent

years our forwards have developed a remarkable ability for breaking up the other side's attack by getting among their opponent's outsides; and this, combined with very rapid heeling, has enabled the back divisions to do full justice to their talents.

The influence of the Scottish schools has been the predominant factor in Cambridge football of the same epoch. Hefty scrummaging and fierce rushing have been prominent characteristics of the forwards. Very frequently have they upset our best-laid schemes, and more than once have they shown up weakness on our part in the tight. Compared with the Dark Blues, the combination behind has not always been so highly developed, and its success has depended more largely on the merits of individual players. In good years this has made little if any difference, but our more purposeful strategy has told its tale when leaner seasons have had to be encountered. When forced to rely on relatively inferior performers we, I think, have made the better show.

Of late Oxford has certainly had her share of class halves. Year after year "stars" have disappeared only, it would seem, to make room for others. The passes E. J. Walton used to hurl his three-quarters were terrific: they wasted no time in transit, and when one had got into taking them, they were simply delightful. He was a great defender also, and the way he used to come across and tackle on the wings was an object-lesson in what can be done by quick starting. Without doubt Walton was one of the best halves I have played with. Following Stoop and Munro, there

came Williamson, who has had few superiors in getting the ball quickly away from the scrum. This applies also to his successor, George Gotley. Cunningham partnered both the last two. More recently there has been the Old Merchant Taylors' International, Cheesman; and Knott, who is possessed of such a beautiful pair of hands. It is doubtful whether any other club can boast of such a series of players extending over so many years. No wonder Oxford has been able to indulge in clever football! We had a complete set of International outsiders in 1909, when the three-quarters consisted of the Scottish flyer Martin, and Poulton Palmer on the wings; and Tarr—a very finished performer with a very highly developed sense of locality and of opening making—and Colin Gilray, who that day “out-Robertshawed” Robertshaw in the feeding of his wing. The result was the defeat of Cambridge by four goals and five tries to one try. A record, needless to say. One of the most consistent three-quarters that represented Oxford was H. F. Terry (1900–1901). He was very unlucky not to gain his Cap. By no means a showy player, everything he did had quality in it. When he tackled you you knew it. He timed his passes most beautifully and he had the comforting habit of dropping in goals when they were badly needed. I will only mention one other Oxford name—that of Crabbie. Apart from his play, which is considered in another chapter, his influence has had a very great effect on Oxford Rugby. Cambridge, perhaps, have not commanded the services of so many outstanding personalities

behind the scrum. H. Mainprice, Clem Lewis and Thomas are those one would notice more particularly among the halves. Mainprice (1902-1905) was an extremely sound player. I do not think he was of the very highest class, but he was only one rung down the ladder. He was "scratch" in every department of the game, and his defence was decidedly of a "plus" quantity. It was a great loss to football that "crocks" compelled him to retire so early. Lewis is a Welsh player of the best type. It is not yet possible to "place" him definitely. The best three-quarters of my time were, I think, poor Louis MacLeod and A. H. McNeil. The latter was a very dangerous opponent when in his stride. Subsequently the light of K. G. MacLeod shone with a radiance that was apt to eclipse his comrades. With such exceptional pace as that possessed by Will and Lowe on the wings, and with such a really clever centre as De Villiers, the South African, the line of 1918 was bound to be dangerous. It was probably the most effective scoring combination the Light Blues have possessed for a good many years. After Strand-Jones—an easy "first" of either side—D. Davies and Dickson have been the most prominent Oxford full-backs. Stanley Horsley is my Cambridge choice for the position. His kicking at times was phenomenal.

Both Varsities have carried so many "big guns" forward that one could select countless packs of equal calibre. John Daniell and V. H. Cartwright can fortunately be picked out as the two greatest scrummagers, without any appearance

of attempting invidious comparisons. "Darky" Bedell-Sivright, the Cambridge skipper of 1901 and 1902, is one of the most prominent representatives of the Scottish type. There can be few more powerful men who have ever played football, and his methods were "hefty" in every way. I am painfully conscious of the numerous fine players who ought to be referred to in connection with Varsity footer of this century, and whose names I have perforce been obliged to omit. The only way I could have dealt with so many would have been to tabulate two lists of forwards and outsides. This is such an inadequate and unsatisfactory method of treatment that I have felt it better to stay my hand. I will not say that there have been none, but there have been precious few really bad footballers who have been given their Blue at either Varsity. When we think of the amount of Rugby that is played at Oxford and Cambridge, and that there is almost all the cream of the Public Schools to draw upon, we shall not wonder at the high standard of Varsity football. That it is not consistently of superlative quality will rather be the subject of our curiosity.

CHAPTER XVI

SCHOOL FOOTBALL

A YEAR or two ago I refereed a school match in which the players were all under fourteen. It was a very interesting experience. Till then I was a little doubtful whether Rugby football was really a game for small kiddies; whether it was not better to postpone their introduction to its joys and perils till they were over rather than under fourteen; whether, even from the point of view of Rugby itself, Association was not a better preliminary training, as tending to give balance and control over the ball whilst dribbling.

Now balance and steadiness on one's "pins" are not sufficiently attended to in the teaching of Rugger. I believe that a large amount of the clumsiness with their feet that is so often noticeable even amongst quite good forwards is due not so much to inherent awkwardness as to the fact that what may be called their "control" muscles have never been adequately developed.

All of us must realise that small boys are made of wire, covered with a remarkable composition of which a notable constituent is elastic. Otherwise they could never survive such a perpetual succession of knocks and falls, tumbles and bruises.

At the same time it has often been questioned whether it was a good thing for their hearts and other internal organs to be subjected, before they were definitely adolescent, to the severe strain that Rugby imposes. Since seeing the game referred to, my own doubts have been largely satisfied. Perhaps I was fortunate in the special match—I had not watched another of the sort for a good many years—as the form displayed was quite remarkable. I do not mean that a large amount of the play was not execrable, judged by the highest standard; and it would have been uncanny if the “purple patches” had been carried out with the precision that would be expected from a good Welsh side.

What struck me most were not the signs of careful coaching but the hints so many of the boys gave of their instinctive knowledge of the finer points of the game.

Imagine my astonishment at the spectacle of a twelve-year-old three-quarter, a bare yard high, sweeping the ball off an opposing forward's feet, running for all the world like Ronald Poulton Palmer, giving the “dummy” three consecutive times; and then, getting into position for and taking a return pass from an equally diminutive wing. True, he was running right across the field; he stopped dead to give the pass, so that the receiver had little chance of getting right away. He was tackled and nearly obliterated as soon as the ball came back to him. But all these are mistakes that can be remedied. The excellences are not so easily inculcated.

There was a half on the other side who appeared to be just twice as big as the ball. He had quite a Dicky Owen idea of how to get it away from the scrum; the only drawback was its relative size. He made valiant efforts; but it really was too large for him. His methods out of touch were masterly, if precocious; and so was his saving. I nearly injured myself with restrained laughter over the latter.

Now the great thing in this junior football is that boys should be evenly matched in age and, as far as possible, in size. A difference of even six months at thirteen may be very appreciably shown in height and weight. However good a "little 'un" may be, it is simply killing him to put him against anything much larger, though possibly only a year older than himself. With this proviso there is a great deal to be said for encouraging early Rugby. I am not at all sure that from its more unceremonious methods, Rugger does not make a greater appeal than the sister code to small boys; and there has certainly been an inclination to exaggerate the strain it imposes on them. But there is an easy way of avoiding excessive strain, and that is to lessen the time of play. A celebrated old International schoolmaster recently gave me as his opinion that two periods of twenty minutes each were quite sufficient for the younger boys of a Public School. He was inclined to think that with all the exercise they get during the week, short halves were very advisable in the practice games of the older fellows as well.

Smaller grounds is another suggestion for the junior trials.

Some boys get hold of the most extraordinary ideas about training, though I do not think there are so many fantastic notions prevalent as there used to be. What they should remember is that training is a matter of common-sense. Its object is to keep people fit and well, and to ensure their bringing out their best in matches. This will not be the case if digestions are upset by eating horrible quantities of unsuitable food. Some boys, for instance, are inordinately fond of jam-puffs and dough-nuts. I used to be, for one; but then my internal arrangements as a growing lad were evidently akin to those of an ostrich. Other people are not so fortunate; and I do urge them to remember that they are striving to be in condition not for themselves alone, but for the glory of their school. It isn't whether they get their colours or not that is the important thing, but whether the school can rely on their best services whenever they may be required. This applies not only to boys on the borders of the First fifteen; it extends to the worst player in the lowest game. If fellows really appreciate this other reason of their duty towards their school, they will not be so thoughtless in taking undue risks with food-stuffs that are liable to cause "sash" pains.

Let boys remember also their responsibility to the school in connection with selecting teams. Anything approaching favouritism is absolutely ruinous. The best men must be chosen.

As regards training itself. Apart from work

on the field, I think a moderate amount of muscular exercise, especially of the back, stomach and joint portions of the body, is very necessary for boys. But what is done must not be of the heavy variety, such as weight lifting, or heavy dumb-bells. It is the bending and stretching movements that give suppleness and balance that are chiefly to be thought of. I would repeat that it is not so much what they do, but *how* they do it, that matters most. Good style, for the reasons given elsewhere, must be acquired.

When we think of the amount of really splendid coaching that most Public School boys have the benefit of, what V. H. Cartwright says in the previous chapter on Forward Play about the non-observance of elementary playing principles so common at the Varsities is quite remarkable. My own experience agrees with his.

It is, of course, a very difficult problem to decide how much a boy ought to be taught and how much should be left to natural instinct and his own intelligence. One does not want to have outsiders who are merely good passing machines. Individuality, provided it does not degenerate into rank selfishness, wants encouraging rather than repressing.

The only general principle I would venture to suggest to those who coach is not to attempt to replace natural brilliance by artificial polish. Be careful, for instance, in the case of a boy with a good instinctive swerve and no idea of passing, that in teaching him the latter he does not lose the former. Mistaken tactics carried out at *full*

speed are often better than the right thing done slowly. For the inculcation of combination, what is the real meaning of an opening is the important lesson to grasp. That an opening consists in getting rid of the ball to somebody else better situated for carrying on the movement, and that that somebody else must see to it that he is in the best position for taking advantage of the pass when it comes to him. Good tackling—without any hesitation about going in for the man—and backing up, both in attack and defence, must be insisted upon. Generally speaking, play in the line out is not considered sufficiently. In school footer, I think, it offers about the best occasion for indulgence in finesse and a few tricks. There are numerous little combination moves from touch that are not risky, but which will teach boys to use their heads and to think things out for themselves.

One word in conclusion. Don't let school forwards think of themselves as mere machines for getting the ball to their outsides. They must learn the rudiments of their own particular branches of play. It is, after all, the first shove which still matters most in hooking; and that cannot be properly applied unless forwards have sound ideas on how to form a pack.

CHAPTER XVII

THE GAME OUTSIDE THE BRITISH ISLES

WHEREVER Britishers come together in large numbers there, almost invariably, will Rugby be played. But the game has appealed to other races besides the British and those of British origin. The French have taken it up with avidity. It is played in German-speaking lands, and also by Spanish South Americans. So long ago as the eighties a Maori team from New Zealand toured in England, and showed a proficiency that enabled them to hold their own with the best of our teams. It would indeed have been a pity if a people of such splendid physique and aptitudes had not learnt to appreciate the merits of the game. I have seen some of them on their native heath, and more perfectly built men from the footer point of view it would be difficult to imagine. Well do I remember an up-country village match I saw at Rotorua a few years back. All the players started with approved foot apparel, but before half-time many had discarded both boots and stockings. The spectacle of bare-footed forwards hooking against studded boots was certainly a little astonishing to my untutored gaze. I could imagine punts and drops, but I was not prepared

for place-kicking with the naked foot. That, however, is what I did see; and one huge kick taken from well outside the twenty-five close to touch only missed the goal by a yard or so!

I had the privilege of captaining the English side that R. V. Stanley (Oxford's representative on the Rugby Union) took to Buenos Ayres in 1910. Most of the teams we met were British, but that was not because there were not several Argentine combinations. The features that impressed us most about the latter were their pace and dash. Though their knowledge of the finer points of play required developing, they evinced considerable aptitude. Their worst faults were wildness and a tendency to lose their heads. It cannot be said that low tackling was indulged in very often, but it would not be fair to judge them from what we then saw. Only a few drops of rain fell during our stay in the Argentine, and some of the grounds, in consequence, were like adamant.

Coming nearer home, the fact that she has already beaten Scotland shows that Rugby in France is no longer a child. On the contrary, it is very much grown up, and has developed into a fine, healthy, well-set-up "young fellow." It has not yet realised its full possibilities, and there are one or two excrescences to be eliminated; but the promise is emphatically obvious. Paris is not the only centre where the game flourishes. Bordeaux is equally important; in fact it is spreading throughout the country. It was in 1906 that I played in the first match between France and

England. What strides our neighbours have made during the interval! A quarter of a century ago Rugby was unknown. To-day it is not we who are superior in its theory. To-morrow—well, may the best side always win!

Rosslyn Park and other clubs have toured successfully in various parts of Germany, in Austria, and even so far east as Budapest. But despite decent teams in such places as Frankfurt, Hanover, etc., it cannot as yet be said that Rugby has gripped the Teutonic imagination. Their interest rather has gone out towards Soccer and hockey.

The greater part of the United States plays a game of its own, but in the Western States Rugby holds the field. The Western Inter-Varsity matches arouse particular enthusiasm.

It is, of course, within the British Empire across the seas that the great strongholds are to be found. Even in the Tropics—Ceylon, for instance, Madras, Calcutta, elsewhere—regular fixtures are carried out.

In Canada, and more especially in British Columbia and Vancouver, pretty good football is played.

We know the prowess of Australian footballers. They have had great difficulties to contend with in Australia. Apart from the fact that Victoria very largely confines itself to a variation as different from Rugger as the American game, professionalism has taken on in New South Wales. What the future has in store there it is hard to say. We can only hope for the best, and it may confidently

be anticipated that the amateur flag will continue to fly bravely.

We have indeed cause to be grateful to New Zealand for the badly needed stimulus the visit of their great touring side in 1905 gave to British play. It seemed more than likely that they would leave with us a new formation also. That, however, was not to be. Very briefly to describe their method of packing and their disposition of the field: They had two men in the front row, three in the second, and two in the third—seven in all. The middle man in the second row, the “lock,” bound the “hookers” together, not his own row. They pushed against the hookers, and the third row pushed against the “lock.” The principle of the scrum was that of a wedge. The players applied their weight centripetally. The chief feature of this formation is the lightning speed with which the ball can be heeled. So fast, in fact, that they had to employ another man—the celebrated wing forward—to put the ball into the scrum. A half could not put the ball in and also get round in time to have it away as it came out. Then they had two outer halves called five-eighths, and three three-quarters.

In attack, the New Zealanders, as a general rule, drew their man more pronouncedly than the Welshmen. They had the capacity for passing the fraction of a second later than any other footballers I have come across. I had an exceptional opportunity of appreciating what was possible for them in this direction, as I played “rover” for England on a memorable day at the Crystal

Palace. The Palace ground was in a condition of liquid mud ; and the ball had that greasy consistency which most people find defies handling, except on rare occasions when fortune is with them.

These drawbacks seemed to affect our visitors hardly at all. They played the game as if it had been perfect weather, with no climatic handicaps of any sort to affect the accuracy of their movements. The commission I was entrusted with enabled me to get into the most favourable position for "smothering" that the rules permit. As the ball flashed out from the New Zealand side of the scrum, I also "flashed," as I thought, just that tiny space of time before he could reasonably expect my advent, on to the five-eighths that Roberts, their half, was passing to.

I can say this for myself ; I was not merely getting to the man that day. I was putting him down very thoroughly each time. Nevertheless, during the whole course of the match but rarely did I manage to secure the ball as well as the player. How it had been transferred to a neighbour is still a mystery to me. I only know that when I picked myself out of the other man—and the mud, my next duty was generally to dash with the utmost celerity to some distant part of the field, where operations were by that time being conducted.

The New Zealanders endeavoured, as a rule, to break the defensive line nearer the scrum than is the usual habit in Wales. Broadly speaking, it was a five-eighths who did the most important damage. (How he did it is more fully suggested in the chapter on Half-back Play.) In the Princi-

pality it is more often left to the wing three-quarter actually to do the piercing.

Needless to say, when talking of teams such as the "All Blacks" and certain fifteens that have represented Wales, any generalisation as to their play or tactics must not be taken too literally. Diversity and variety of method will be salient characteristics, and those, for example, who hoped to defeat the manoeuvres of a Western fifteen by concentrating on the wings would speedily have cause to rue their error.

The tendency to break through in the centre gave the New Zealand outsides greater scope for the exhibition of their individual excellence. They ran about as straight as is possible, and it was a rare thing for one of their wings to be bored into touch. They had such perfect confidence in each other's ability to catch the ball that they were able to take apparent liberties without more than ordinary risk. They had further that invaluable knowledge that someone would always be there to back them up.

I have at various times made uncompromising remarks about their wing-forward position. I have even gone so far as to call it an "abomination of desolation." I was once taken to task by a writer who suggested that if the player in that position had been called an outside instead of a forward, and had been considered as an extra scrum half, most of the outcry against him would never have been heard. "I attribute," he continued, "the rest of the feeling against him simply to the fact that two scrum halves are not now the

fashion in England. In my day they were. . . . Gallaher, of course, while putting the ball in, must have been off-side every time for the fraction of a second; but it was a technical rather than an actual offence. For the life of me I cannot see that there was anything illegal or even objectionable in his position, though . . . he may have abused it."

Now it would be unbecoming, to say the least of it, if, after so many years, and on an occasion when it is practically impossible for him to defend himself, I were to make grave insinuations about Gallaher's methods. I have no such intention. As a matter of fact, whatever he did as wing forward was carried out so openly that there could really be no suggestion of trickery or dirty play about it. It is simply a question of a different interpretation of the spirit of the rules; and the fact that he was not penalised shows that referees of that time considered his practice only to be unusual, and not contrary to the laws of the game.

I should not have mentioned Gallaher by name were it not that his personality is so intimately connected in our minds with this special position in the field. I labour the point, as I should be sorry to feel I had unwittingly implied any reflections as to the fairness or integrity of such an excellent sportsman. My objections are certainly not to the man nor to his personal methods: they are entirely directed against the position. He certainly played right up to the whistle. I only wish more people did the same.

Where I do not agree with my correspondent

is when he says that the wing forward, extra scrum half—or what you will—was only off-side for the fraction of a second. From my experience as “rover” at the Crystal Palace, I found that after putting the ball in he made no attempt to move away. He was off-side for a very appreciable “fraction,” and what is more, in just the situation where he handicapped very considerably an opponent who was trying to get round the scrum. The fact that referees classed him as a forward *did* make a difference in their attitude towards what he was doing.

By retaining a hand or a finger on the pack, he was allowed to take a good yard of space at the side of the scrum. With their marvellously rapid heeling, that extra yard was often more than a sufficient shield to the half who was getting the ball away. But it was when the half decided to go through on his own that the defence was placed at the greatest disadvantage. In seeing to it that he did not get in the light of his own man, the wing forward more often than not absolutely “messed up” the intending tackler, and thereby made clear his companion’s path.

The possibility of the break through, and the prospect of this difficulty in meeting it, had always to be thought of. All these additional burdens on the defence obviously benefited the New Zealanders. Under these circumstances, I submit that not only was the off-side breach more than technical, but that his very position tended inevitably to make the wing forward an obstructionist. Now, with anyone less clever and more

unscrupulous than Gallaher, the result is simply hopeless. In other parts of the world, when the refereeing has not been of the best, I have seen things happening which, from one point of view, were excessively funny, but which had no connection with the game of Rugby as we know it.

The danger of latitude in this direction is so contrary to the best interests of football that no form of obstruction, or what is likely to lead to it, should be tolerated. The best attack needs no protection. The New Zealanders of all teams certainly required none. They were a marvellous combination. There was no trace of weakness in their defensive armour. There was not a single aggressive manœuvre at which they were not adepts. The strategy of neither South African team that has been over was so brilliant or so audacious as that displayed by the New Zealanders. The 1906 visitors owed their success to the soundness of their tactics and to the great individual excellence of the outsides. The pace and handling of their three-quarters, the dash and courage of the full-backs, are features that will live in our memories. The forwards were good without being great.

Curiously enough, in 1912-1913 the position was reversed. Then it was the forwards who deserved to be placed on the highest pinnacles. The Springboks were indeed lucky in being able to put into the field such a galaxy of physical talent. It is no disparagement to their football eminence to say that their wonderful physique was the greatest asset their forwards possessed. One

can deal with weight ; height often is not altogether an unmixed blessing in a scrum ; pace can be opposed by pace. It is the combination of these attributes that is so deadly. Where they are allied with cleverness, with a very conspicuous lack of clumsiness, and a real knowledge of how to play the game—well, we can begin to understand why South Africa beat all the countries of the United Kingdom in the season of 1912–1913.

CHAPTER XVIII

TRAINING AND OUTFIT

WHAT does training aim at producing ?

A good wind is the first essential. Remember that the breathing "apparatus" is not confined to the chest ; abdominal exercises are necessary for bringing out its full working capacity.

Bigness of muscle is not the object to attain ; in fact there is a danger that the man who strives too earnestly after size will tend to become muscle bound. "Whipcord" is what is wanted. Particular attention should be paid to the various muscles that support the joints. It is these that are so liable to go wrong, more especially when one is unfit, and it is the bending and twisting exercises that will benefit them more particularly.

Control of one's movements is most important on the field and one main object of training is to induce the muscles to obey *instantly* the decisions of the brain.

For those who can afford the time, a few "kickabouts" during the week will be the principal item of their programme, but my personal experience leads me to believe that, for perfect fitness, they are not quite sufficient in themselves, and

should be supplemented by a certain amount of muscular exercise.

If I had my Varsity days over again—a period when, once having got fit at the beginning of the season and barring crocks or illness, one was never really out of condition—I should do a little more muscle developing and perhaps a little less kicking about. At Oxford, in my time, there was a vague idea that body muscles were not much wanted in an outside, and that their presence might in some mysterious manner take off from his pace.

I am confident now that this was an erroneous notion, and that the building up, more especially of the back and stomach muscles, increases a man's stamina, and thereby gives him greater power to resist staleness, which is without doubt the most insidious and dangerous enemy to training that the keen and constant footballer has to meet.

When practising with a ball it ought not aimlessly to be kicked or thrown about. In punting, for instance, have a line and endeavour regularly to find touch from various angles and at different distances. Merely to send it more or less in some direction induces carelessness. A little quick kicking and kicking high and following up to catch the ball again ere it bounces are both excellent. One ought in the latter to kick a sufficient distance to prevent the catch being possible, unless one has travelled at full speed the whole way.

Where there are a number, and bouts of passing are being practised, it is a good plan to begin each

bout as if the ball was just being heeled from the scrum. All the participants should be well behind each other in proper position. The scrum half has then to get the ball away as in a match, and each man has to come up as fast as he can to take his pass. He will otherwise find that he is left hopelessly behind. There is no better method of getting into the habit of quick starting, and there is the further inestimable advantage that everyone will be going their hardest as they give and take their passes. If people start casually in a line, it will invariably be found that half the passes are forward. This may make little difference from the training point of view, but it does no good to one's football.

Forwards will appreciate that coming along in a body with the ball at their feet, even when there is no one opposing them, is not an easy thing to do correctly. They must learn to keep the ball close, for if they kick too hard their rush, provided that the enemy's back knows anything about his business, would in an actual game have come to an untimely end.

When someone overruns the ball he should be careful to get as quickly as possible out of the way of others, and to come again into the dribble from behind. In practice he ought never to wait and let the ball come up to him.

Too many forwards, especially in the metropolis, seem to possess not even the most rudimentary ideas of how to transfer the ball safely to another member of their side. Passing, then, is a thing they, too, should practise, and it may be as well

to repeat here the caution about not doing it forward.

The Oxford pack of 1901-1902 gave many brilliant examples of what can be gained by short hand-to-hand passing. Their skill in this direction was due to assiduous practice. They utterly bewildered several of the teams we met, and not only secured many tries on their own, but made the getting of numerous other scores an easy matter for their halves and three-quarters.

Tackling in practice is too risky a proceeding to be worth encouraging. The very fact that it has to be done in cold blood makes it almost certain that it will only half-heartedly be carried out. We once tried the experiment at Oxford. An endeavour was being made to teach a back. In a particularly foolish and thoughtless moment I offered my services as the object on whom the tackle was to be worked. Cartwright was the demonstrator, and the first time I saw his burly form hurtling through the air my courage failed me; at the last moment I stepped to one side. The distance he slid along the ground on his face showed what an excellent example he would have given of the art.

It was really very amusing, though at the time he did not seem to appreciate the humour of the situation. The educational point of view had, however, to be considered, so I faithfully promised to stand my ground the next time. I kept the promise by shutting my eyes just as the crash came. I can only hope that the lesson did good. From the way I came to earth Cartwright must

have given even a finer example than his previous effort promised.

I rose slowly, and sorely, and sadly from the ground with a limp that remained for a week, and with the firm determination which I have never departed from, never again to be a party to "cold-blooded" collaring. On one other occasion, some years before this incident, I was engaged in tackling practice. We carried that victim home on a stretcher with bad concussion of the brain. No, I do not advocate this special method of preparing for football.

When one thinks of the opportunities that teams like Cambridge and Oxford have for combined practice, it is really a matter of surprise that London fifteens ever manage to hold their own against the Varsities.

The case of provincial teams is similar. Apart from the fact that many of the big Rugger centres have proper training establishments where players can go for exercise during the week, the relatively small geographical area of the town enables them to have their grounds in much more get-at-able places. A spare half-hour or so whilst there is daylight can be utilised for a kick about. For most people it would take at least three hours to do the same thing in London. The difficulties, however, that oppress metropolitan Rugby men can be very largely and are being overcome. The recent improvement in playing capacity has induced people to pay more attention to keeping fit than^{as} they did. The demand for training facilities has created the supply. At the beginning

of the century the Old Merchant Taylors were among the few London clubs that organised club training during the week for their members. Now there are several. The effect of this new departure is quite remarkable. Many players shirk the necessary effort and trouble when they are left to exercise themselves by themselves. Opportunity never seems to offer, and when it does they go about it after the manner of the "perfunctory lick" of the small boy washing himself. It certainly requires a strong effort of will to work at dumb-bells or physical exercise when the only inspiration is one's own conscience, and most people love their little creature comforts far too dearly to create opportunities.

Where a club, on the other hand, can secure some place for training, conveniently situated, and at convenient times, there are many inducements for men to turn up. I have never believed in the doctrine that human nature is bad at bottom. People are keen on getting fit—when the path is made easy for them. The actual exercising is more enjoyable when several are working together and, somehow or another, it seems easier to do things at a certain time and at a certain place than when one has only to consult one's own comfort and inclination.

Club training arrangements are not so difficult to make as has generally been supposed. There are numerous gymnasium and suitable halls, to say nothing of riding schools, that can be hired at no great expense. Incidentally it may be pointed out that these collective efforts, far from

discouraging individual exercise, tend rather in the opposite direction. The consciousness of greater vigour and condition they bring about seems to stimulate men's energies, and to obviate that slack feeling which prevents their trying something additional as their own.

Those who can exercise in company have so many equally efficacious means of getting fit that there is no need to dogmatise on what they should go in for, and what they should leave alone.

From the point of view of killing one quickly the tug-of-war is about the best thing going. Hitherto it has not been much considered for footer purposes. Some knowledge of how properly to tug is necessary, but that is not very difficult to acquire. A little, perhaps, will go a long way for outsides, but for forwards it is most excellent, not only for getting up their muscle, but for calling out those particular forms of stamina and endurance without which continuous and honest scrummaging cannot be accomplished.

A novelty to most people is large ball throwing. This has been indulged in at the Bath Club for many years. It is certainly more amusing and, I think, just as efficacious as the somewhat dreary dumb-bell exercises.

The "instrument" is a large stuffed leather ball weighing about ten pounds or so, and is thrown about from one to the other. It looks very simple, and it is only when one has been hurling it for ten minutes that one realises how many muscles have been brought into play.

One of the chief advantages is the endless variety

of throws that can be made, either in sitting or standing positions, with one or two hands, or even with the feet, and from various distances. Another is that one gets just as much benefit out of the catching as out of the throwing. Many people ought not to practise at the same time. For two it is splendid.

We will approach those means of training which do not require the presence of others for their performance from the point of view of the man whose weekday time is fully occupied, and who can only get off on Saturday afternoons. Now if he has any sense of decency in him—I will put it on no other ground—he will lead a regular life. To get to bed in respectable time is the most important rule he must conform to. Drinking should be done at meal-times, and cold water or hot milk is ever so much better than whisky before going to roost. As to smoking—well, I honestly believe one is better without it. The excuse that it's bad to give it up too suddenly has never convinced me. At the same time I am not going to pretend that I consider it spells utter ruination to footer fitness. I do preach moderation, however, and pipes for preference. One tremendous reason for abstinence from tobacco is the psychological effect it has in making people realise that they are in training.

It appears to be quite useless to try to induce any but a very few to run in the early mornings or in the evenings. Running along streets at night is not an amusing occupation, and to get up by artificial light to take an early spin is positively

revolting to all who are not Spartan heroes. It ought, of course, to be done. It engenders a feeling of offensive virtue that sometimes goes to the length of encouraging others.

When they do run, people should not omit a few starts. There is nothing like these for increasing one's pace, and it is, after all, the man who is fast for a twenty or thirty yards' burst whose speed is most valuable on the football field. In practice spins the great thing, I think, is to keep the stride long.

Skipping is generally admitted to be one of the very best exercises not only for the wind, but also for developing stamina and for toning up the system generally. Why it is not more universally indulged in is partly due, no doubt, to the difficulty and comparative costliness of getting proper rope.

When one asks for a skipping rope in a shop, one is usually shown an article with pretty handles to which is attached a certain length of light cord. It is generally not easy to impress on the salesman that you require something more than a toy. Ordinary rope, even when it is of the requisite thickness — adequate weight and thickness are essential points—is not satisfactory. It too quickly becomes untwisted and worn out.

Window cord does admirably, but shops do not, as a rule, stock it of the necessary consistency, and if you order it you will possibly have to acquire a minimum of twelve yards, and even then the makers' out size may not be of a sufficient diameter. One would have thought that athletic outfitters would have made a greater



"LET IT OUT, FORWARDS"



A. D. STOOP

"MARK THAT MAN THERE!"

speciality of workmanlike skipping ropes at moderate prices.

Skipping, of course, must be taken seriously. Twenty or thirty violent leaps with the body and limbs all bunched together or loafing through a couple of hundred turns are not of much value. The position of the body and feet, the question of balance—in fact, all the things that go to make up style should be considered. I advocate attention to good style in all forms of training, not for the sake of graceful deportment, but because it teaches the muscles to obey promptly and helps, moreover, to concentrate the mind on what is being done.

One certainly gets more work out of turning the rope backwards than forwards. The lungs have freer play, and the body is more likely to be erect and not doubled up. It is well to vary the skips continually, and also their pace. Occasional “pepper,” the equivalent of “give her ten” in rowing, will greatly increase the exertion.

Besides variation in pace, there are endless ways of alighting—on alternate feet with and without a secondary spring; hopping; a heel-and-toe jig with each foot; a “ballet-girl flick”—are a few that will suggest themselves. Timing oneself to do a few hundred revolutions in a given time is also a good plan.

The point, it will be gathered, is not to allow the skipping to become merely a mechanical effort. The quality is of greater importance than the quantity. As regards the latter, it will be well to decide on a definite number, or time,

beforehand rather than to go on until one is exhausted.

Dumb-bells are, of course, the great stand-by of the man who has little space or opportunity for training. They are, I fear, in the majority of cases, little more than a "stand-by." They usually lie in the corner of some cupboard or room, and are rarely touched except occasionally with a duster.

There is no getting away from the fact that the exercises are monotonous. Still, their value cannot be doubted, and it is a pity that so few people have the necessary energy and perseverance to work at them regularly. Even a couple of minutes every morning or evening has a surprising effect in keeping one's muscles in condition.

Where possible, however, I prefer Indian clubs from the footer point of view. They get at and strengthen those delicate shoulder and joint muscles which are so easily strained in football, and they are not nearly such drudgery as dumb-bells. There is no reason why the latter, where Indian clubs are not available, should not be used for several of the club exercises, more especially for those varieties which principally affect the back, stomach and knees.

Walking is a real good exercise that will be found particularly useful in getting rid of stiffness. A Sunday afternoon saunter cannot generally be described as "walking" in the sense here intended. To get real benefit the stride must be as long as possible and the pace a sharp one, so that the

limbs are thoroughly stretched and the muscles are made to work properly.

Occasional variations such as rapid marching, extra long striding, and a few sprints, will add enormously to the amount of exercise that is obtainable. After a couple of hours' tramp of this character few will be found to scoff at walking as a means of training.

I will just mention two other methods of getting ready for the football season. These are not available for everyone, but they are worth considering, more especially for those who, for some reason or other, have to miss a number of matches and want to get speedily into condition again. For quick returns running on shingle is hard to beat. I discovered its efficacy some years back, when at the seaside in September. There is not exactly much pleasure to be gained out of the performance, but a little at a time, provided it is done fast enough, goes a very long way, and the effect on the ankles and knees, in addition to the wind, is very telling. It is advisable to use fairly thick-soled boots, as the wear and tear on the feet is naturally considerable. The other means is very simple, but it is so violent in its action that it should only be employed with discretion. It consists in sprinting at full speed up mountain slopes. It used to finish me so promptly the one year I tried it that I had great fears as to my condition, and by no means looked forward to the first match. I found, however, that so far as my wind was concerned I was in excellent trim when I got on the field.

Exhaustively to treat the subject of training would require a large volume to itself. I have only attempted to throw out some hints which my own experience leads me to believe are sound. I have drawn attention to little points which are often lost sight of, but which I am certain increase the benefit of, as well as the interest that can be derived from, the various exercises. The great thing for football is to have one's muscles under perfect control, so that they will respond *at once* to whatever is required of them. To ensure this state of affairs the mind must co-operate with the body, and it cannot be repeated too often that mental concentration is essential to the proper performance of any physical exertion.

OUTFIT

Provided forwards don't wear serge knickers, and that *no* member of the team has anything in the nature of a buckle exposed, there is only one article of attire that need detain us. That, however, shall not be dismissed unceremoniously. The subject I am now about to deal with is, of course, boots. The first thing to be said about them is that they must fit properly. The next that they are nearly always uncomfortable, and cannot be expected to last unless they are of good quality to begin with, and are dried and otherwise attended to after every game. Thirdly, they must be properly studded—and casual bits of string are not the right laces; the long ones that wind round and round the ankle are the most satisfactory, and give the best support. Per-

sonally I am convinced that for outsiders *good* studs are better than bars. Some forwards prefer the latter, but, even for them, I am not sure that a happy combination of the two is not advisable. Now, whether they be studs or bars, they will not retain—save in very exceptional instances—their pristine “bite” of the ground for an entire season. They want renewing, at least once, and frequently much more often.

Really it is nothing short of criminal the slackness, the carelessness, and the lack of attention that so many players show in regard to their boots. I use emphatic language about people’s neglect of this important matter in the hope that sinners will not only see the error of their ways, but will strive to earn the mercy that is due to sincere repentance by taking a personal interest in the renovation of their studs or bars, as the case may be. Now it is, unfortunately, not usually an easy matter to get these articles satisfactorily replaced. Most bootmakers around London—it is very different in the big Rugger centres of Wales, of the West of England, and of the Midland Counties—seem to have no knowledge (and no receptive faculty for acquiring it) of how to ensure the grip that is so essential, if floundering and slipping are to be avoided on even a dry day. One tiny fraction-of-an-inch-thick splodge of leather is not a stud in the proper acceptation of the term. Nor are two or three such splodges, even when superimposed, unless they be properly welded together with some prospect of cohesion for more than the period of one afternoon.

If one wants to get something that will adequately perform its duty, one must take personal trouble. More than one visit to the particular bootmaker will possibly be necessary to explain exactly what is required; possibly, also, the boots will have to be returned more than once. If any of my readers have had the good fortune to hit on a capable stud repairer, they should certainly tell all their friends about him. To stick in studs that *will* stick is evidently specialists' work—apparently, at anyrate, beyond the power of the ordinary general boot-repairing practitioner.

The sad part is that the actual operation is not a very complicated one. The diameter at the base of the stud must be greater than it is at the apex, but the difficulty is generally the insecure attachment to the sole of the boot—one tiny tack, for instance, is not sufficient. In justice to the bootmaking fraternity, it must be admitted that large numbers of Rugger men are excessively mean—or too slack to bother—over the price they pay for their football boots. That any “old pair” will do is responsible, I believe, for many lost tries and for much “sloppy” play.

The sole of a cheap boot will not stand the strain of a decent stud; it will either bump up inside and cause a blister or discomfort, or else it will simply drop its burden at the first available opportunity. Those cheap soles are only made for quarter-inch projections, and it cannot be impressed too strongly on people that the length of a stud, if it is to be of any service at all (except

on hard grounds) must extend to the full limit permitted by the rules.

For talking so persistently on boots, some doubtless will think that I am making a mountain out of an insignificant mole-hill (I only wish I could, as regards some studs I have seen); that all that I have said is very obvious and that it could all be summarised in four words: "Attend to your boots." Very true. I plead guilty even to the charge of "damnable iteration" on the subject. My excuse is that the only way to make people realise is to "peg away" at the point till one has wormed a passage through the apathy and indifference that prevent men giving it adequate consideration.

Just briefly to mention a self-apparent fact to those who offend in such matters is unfortunately too much like pouring water on to a duck's back. I have suggested that faulty or inferior foot coverings were responsible for many a lost opportunity. One has only to think of the number of times during a game that chances are lost through slips that cannot be accounted for. We all say "Bad luck." If we could probe the mystery I wonder on how many occasions we should find a simple explanation, such as a missing stud or an ill-fitting boot. Now, it is a curious fact that they don't flounder nearly so badly in the West. Are the men of Wales born with greater surety of balance than those of London? I doubt it. But I do know this, that in Wales you never find a team taking the field with half its members minus half their studs, and those they

have retained worn away to virtual nothingness. I should like some of my London friends, who have smiled a tolerant superior smile when I have been persistently insistent on footgear, to examine some of those Welsh boots and to notice the care that is taken of them.

To those who are not too deeply submerged in the mire of casualness and sloth, it would be a revelation and an object-lesson.

CHAPTER XIX

REMINISCENCES AND CHATTER

IN a sense, perhaps, the hardest tussle I was ever engaged in was the Oxford *v.* Edinburgh University Match of 1901. My chief recollection of the game is that I spent considerably more than half the time on the ground, either underneath or on top of an opponent. Edinburgh University that year had a remarkable back division. The team they brought against us contained only one outside who was not an International, and that man, E. W. Baker, played for the South and in other important trials. We had some fine players, too, on the Oxford side.

Both teams had unbeaten records up to the special game in question, and the omens were all propitious for a fine display of Rugby football. In one respect, the omens were correct, and in that particular respect it was a fine display. I should imagine, however, that the onlookers got rather tired of so much "fineness" in one direction. It is most delightful to see good tackling, but continual bottling is apt to pall.

So frightened were we of what might happen if our opponents got away that we received strict orders before the game started to go right up for

defence whenever and immediately they got the ball in the scrum; and this no matter in what part of the field operations were taking place. It soon became evident that they entertained the same exaggerated apprehensions about us.

The result was that as soon as anybody got the ball—occasionally quite an appreciable time beforehand—he was forcibly downed and sat upon. It was an extraordinary contest; hardly ever was a bout of passing allowed to make any ground. It was a case of smother, smother, smother the whole game through. We emerged from this smothering process with a seven-point victory; Terry dropping a wonderful goal, and Eberle hurling himself over the line after a pretty little blind side movement by our halves.

The only man who apparently could not be “sat upon” that afternoon was Strand-Jones, the Oxford back. It was certainly not because Edinburgh didn’t try to get at him, but he was on the top of his form. He showed a unique capacity for tiring out the other side’s forwards. They had to make for him, otherwise he was always likely to run right through; but however much he “jinked” about, they never seemed able to touch him, and he invariably finished “fooling” them with a long touch-finding kick.

Only once that season did I see him play his little game too often, and that was against another Scottish side that shall be nameless. If it had not been for the promptness of the referee, neither Oxford nor Wales might ever have had the services of their full-back again. We may perhaps agree

with what one of the culprits said afterwards, when everything had been forgiven and forgotten : " Eh, Strand-Jones, you're an arful annoying fellow to play against. I hope you'll get your Cap against Scotland." (The elder Bancroft till that season had been a fixture in the Welsh side.) " But if you try your tricks against them, you'll have a worse time than you did this afternoon." History relates that when Wales did play Scotland, not only did the " Strander " play his tricks, but it was the Scottish forwards and not he who had the bad time ; he ran them off their legs.

Another " arful annoying " back to play against, for a different reason, was Gamlin. He did not seem to be at all fast, but he always seemed to be in a position to prevent your going over the line. I should strongly advise nobody but Gamlin to adopt the Gamlin method of tackling. He was an exception that proves the rule about going low. The way he dealt with his adversaries was most uncomfortable and disconcerting to the victims. He dropped on them, as it were, from above. He was a heavy man too ! I wish I could have seen him tackling some of the giants of previous generations. From what one has heard of their prowess in handing off and in strong running, the spectacle would have been very awesome, but distinctly fascinating. I have some idea of what it would have been like, from seeing how he once took a large and pacy Irishman, when the latter, coming down at full speed, was about three yards from our line, and perhaps half-a-dozen feet from touch. There was a spring by

the Englishman ; two bodies rose into the air, and the next thing was a seething mass of humanity lying well outside the touch-line. Both men eventually arose, apparently uninjured, and the game proceeded. How precisely it was done I do not know. The most remarkable feature was the distance and the direction they travelled ere reaching terra firma.

The most terrific tackle I have ever witnessed was the one that closed W. H. Welsh's football career. It is indeed sad to think that it should have had such a tragic result ; for a cleaner, fairer, or better example of how a man should be brought down it would be hard to imagine.

Welsh, it will be remembered, was a very fast, sturdy runner, a real terror when in his stride, and a wing three-quarter of the famous Scottish team of 1900-1901. The accident took place in the following season, during the England and Scotland game. The Scottish halves having drawn the defence, put their threes in motion, and Welsh, taking full advantage of the opening, came tearing down the middle of the ground. Unable to pass without some risk of an intercept, he went straight ahead, and, from the way he was moving, no ordinary tackle could have saved the English line. Fortunately for us, J. T. Taylor was at hand. They met with a crash that could be heard all over the ground. Instinctively we all paused to see what had happened. The regrettable consequences were not really due to the vigour of the tackle. Welsh apparently twisted something internally as he fell. The incident I have described

need not deter anyone from going hard. There is, of course, a risk; but it is nothing like that which must be taken by those who only put half their heart into the effort.

Of the great players I have played with and against, I think J. E. Crabbie, who captained Oxford my first year at the Varsity, was about the cleverest footballer. What he did not know about outside play was not worth troubling about; and, what is more, he hardly ever made a mistake in his own game on the wing. He had the priceless gift of always being just where he was wanted.

He had need, indeed, to strain this capacity to its full extent, that season when I was his centre. After this lapse of time I can speak impersonally of myself; and I will only say that it is small wonder that the other side were frequently deceived as to my movements. They—*i.e.* the movements—often deceived me just as much. Crabbie, however, seemed to know all about them, and when the ball did leave my hands—not a very usual occurrence—he was usually there to grab what was generally a poor apology for a pass.

Few people who saw the University match of 1900 are likely to forget the way he twice tackled A. E. Hind, the celebrated Cambridge sprinter. Now Hind was one of those comparatively rare persons who could reproduce his running track form on the football field. When he got off, it was like the proverbial arrow from a bow.

I well remember one North *v.* South game at Birkenhead, when I was playing centre to him. I gave him the ball with only the back to pass,

just on the half-way line. I do not think I ever appreciated what real pace was till I saw how he scored that try. Stanger Leathes, the North back, a player certainly not remarkable for slowness, was, in the words of the poet, "left standing." So was I, marvelling and admiring.

The golden precept about "backing up" is not applicable on such occasions — at anyrate, for ordinary mortals. This other incident helps to bring out the true value of Crabbie's efforts. Both times Hind had taken the ball beautifully, and was well in his stride. Both times there seemed no prospect of a score being averted, except that a solid little form was to be seen scudding along. When all apparently was over bar the shouting, the little form left the ground; a first grip just above the knees, and then both were lying at full length on the earth, Hind firmly clasped by the ankles. I have never seen the equals of those tackles for artistic execution. Many people, who ought to have known what they were talking about, have said that Crabbie rarely showed quite the same form when playing in Scotland that he displayed for Oxford. The Scottish line at that period was, of course, a remarkably fine one; but even so it was a matter of surprise to us that he could be left out of it. It might be mentioned that Crabbie and "Teddy" Morgan, the Welsh International, were very similar in two respects: they both seemed very much smaller and slighter than they really were. It was not till you had cannoned off them, or they had brushed you aside, when you could not get a proper "hold," that

you realised what weight, pace and strength the pair possessed.

Another point they shared in common was the knowledge of what going for the line means. With the slightest opening, the chances were that either of them would get there somehow. Their example is worthy of the close attention of the vast majority of wings.

One does not, as a rule, associate peacocks—or, for that matter, any species of birds—with football grounds. The only place, so far as I know, where you are likely to meet them when playing football is at Northampton. Franklin's Gardens apparently have other attractions besides Rugby, and I shall not readily forget an experience of one particular "side-show."

It was during an Oxford University *v.* Northampton game. We had already had two very hard fights that week against Cambridge and Leicester, and had beaten both, though the former had been hot favourites for the Varsity match. Perhaps we might be excused, in such circumstances, for feeling a little bit lifeless when we went on to the field for the third time in five days.

Be this as it may, the fact remains that we gave anything but a dashing display in the first half. I believe we did manage to score a try, but though really the better side, there seemed every prospect of our losing through sheer physical incapacity to keep going.

For the first quarter of an hour after changing ends, we were the mere shadows of what had been described in one of the papers only that morning

as "the finest Oxford team since Vassall's days." I wonder how many of our winning predecessors and successors have had the same language applied to them? True, we were without Cartwright, but even his presence and exhortations could hardly have shaken us out of our lethargy.

By some means or other we prevented our opponents from scoring. How it was done I do not remember, but, judging from the number of drop-outs from the twenty-five I had to make, it may be presumed that we were not unlucky.

It was on the last of these occasions, just as I was about to kick, that I saw a peacock a few yards away, strutting majestically towards me. I stopped dead, wondering whether I was dreaming. Pulling myself together, I ventured to look around. Others had seen it also. The same look of startled astonishment was on their faces.

Reassured by the fact that all had seen it, we burst out laughing. Whether the peacock, the shock, or the laughter was the cause, the effect was certainly remarkable. We woke up, and commenced to fling the ball about with extraordinary precision and success. Despite the fine defence against us, we put on four or five more tries before the whistle blew; and the more we laughed the better the football we played.

I have noticed the peacocks in Franklin's Gardens two or three times since, but none has ever deigned again to invade the "arena." It may be a coincidence, but that was the last time I played on a winning side at Northampton.

It is strange how often a little incident like the

one I have described alters the whole character of a game. I remember once an attempt of mine to drop a goal at long range, which found touch instead, having a similar effect. The whole side laughed, and immediately we piled up points with great rapidity.

The "glorious uncertainty of football" is a phrase we have all heard many times; the absurd irrelevances that have such an important bearing on the uncertainty have received little attention. A curious psychological fact about a team collectively is that small and trivial occurrences usually appear to affect it more pronouncedly than the bigger happenings. Why this should be the case is most interesting, but scarcely germane to a talk on football.

I have several times gone on to the field with the firm intention of giving an exhibition of tackling as it ought to be done; and after the game candid friends have unkindly suggested various more or less uncomplimentary reasons why I had failed to do so. I have only once turned out with the firm intention of never attempting to lay an opponent on the ground.

I had had my nose broken a day or two before, and only played because Oxford were very short, and on the distinct understanding that not much would be expected of me in defence. The only possible thing to be done in such a case is to bluff. The fates were with me, and it came off. They had a pretty good team out, and began attacking right away. Fortunately for me, I intercepted twice, and both times we scored.

The fear of being touched acted as a substitute for wings, and I am sure that when I had the ball that day I ran as I have never done before or since. Being a goal and a try down, in spite of having had the best of the argument, rather took the steam out of their aggressiveness; but they stuck stubbornly to their guns, and several times I had to make some show of defending.

My *vis-à-vis* had been rather impressed with the way I had gone through previously; and having no suspicion about my condition, generally passed when I waved my arms at him. What I think really induced him to do this so often was that early in the game he elected to go past me; and valiantly as I attempted to get out of his path, I was not successful, and somehow or another he ran into me and came a "cropper." The talking-to he received for not passing had a most salutary effect from our point of view, and subsequently I was never badly shown up.

I strongly advise, however, anybody who has any self-respect or any regard for his duty towards his side never to attempt this kind of bluff. I tried it again for part of the next match with the most horrible and ghastly results.

It has often appeared to me that forwards leave the field with a much too "fit" appearance about them. They have obviously a lot of reserve power and go left, which could probably have been expended to great advantage during the game. It ought not to do a healthy fellow in good training much harm to work himself to a standstill—rather the reverse.

I have only once met a pack that had played to the very last ounce of its collective stamina. They were a sorry spectacle in some ways perhaps, but a sight for the gods in others. They had shot their last bolt, and I do not believe that at the moment I came up to them they could have raised a trot amongst the eight. It must have been about 1907, when the London Scottish and Old Merchant Taylors match was renewed after having been in abeyance for some fourteen seasons.

If only half the stories one hears about the early contests of these two clubs be correct, it was certainly a good thing that the fixture was dropped. One side finishing with thirteen men to the other's eleven is "War" with a capital "W" indeed. It does not, on the face of it, seem to have much connection with the game as we like to know it.

Needless to say, our methods have been milder on the occasions of this century's meetings; but it is doubtful whether they have been any less effective or less keen on that account. The old fights had all been draws, which perhaps accounted for the added interest as to what would be the result of the first of the renewed struggles.

Well, from the Old Boys' point of view, it turned out to be one of the best games they have ever engaged in. The Scottish were easy favourites, but we fairly and squarely beat them; not by superior ability, but by hard, honest toil that gave nothing away, and took all that it could get. We lived through some very exciting periods, and our forwards timed their strength to the perfection

of its complete dissipation in the very last scrum. I shall never forget their appearance three or four minutes after the whistle had gone; when in answer to my enthusiastic "Well played, boys!" the only response was one weary smile and a quite meek indication that another was thirsty.

But there was a something behind all the signs of exhaustion that gladdened the heart. "Something attempted, something done." That always carries its own rewards. Outsides, perhaps, cannot play themselves out to the same extent as forwards. Their exertions affect primarily the wind rather than the muscles. The former, though the first to go, recovers itself more quickly than do the latter; and to a fit man distress in the breathing apparatus is a very temporary phenomenon.

At the same time, while it lasts, its symptoms are very much more apparent and exacting. It is not really correct to suggest that an outside necessarily has not to put forth such strenuous physical exertion as a scrummager. Like their functions on the field, the strain is of a different kind.

An outside, referring more particularly to halves and centres, would certainly feel it acutely if he were suddenly made to do a forward's duty; but it is by no means certain that the converse is not nearly equally applicable. Absolutely full speed and going at a fast pace are two very different things. It is the former which kills, and a forward has not so much of it as his back confrères.

A forward's work is slow (relatively) and muscular, but continuous. A back, on the other

hand, takes his exercise in dashes and bursts. I have raised the question of the division of labour because so many forwards appear to entertain the erroneous notion that on them falls not only a major part, but practically the whole of the work of the team. A good outside, I cordially agree, is ornamental; but let no one go away thinking that he is of the queen bee variety, and not a solid labourer as well.

Great runs and glorious tries! What memories they call up! One of the most sensational scoring efforts ever seen was that which enabled Oxford to win the Varsity match of 1900. Cambridge had had the whip-hand throughout, and a quarter of an hour from the end play seemed to have settled permanently in the Dark Blue twenty-five. One ferocious Cambridge onslaught followed another. Scoring seemed only a question of time, despite the heroic endeavours of the defence. Suddenly an Oxford player picked up the ball near his goal-line, as it was bouncing in the loose. He flung it to his neighbour, who promptly did the same. Oxford outsidest sprang apparently from space to join in the passing. Right across the field went the ball, back again it was passed to the centre, over the half-way line, and still the movement continued. I do not remember who gained the try, nor how many hands had helped on the ball's progress. Such details do not matter; but, as a great friend of mine always asserts, that whole length of the field piece of combination ushered in the present-day game.

Of brilliant individual bursts, those who saw

it, will single out one of Poulton Palmer's in the England and South Africa match of 1913. Receiving the ball well inside his own half-way, Palmer commenced to "hare" for the touch-line. Then he seemed to stop, and his opponents, in doubt whether he was going to kick or to pass to his wing, dashed at various angles to where danger seemed to threaten. Having drawn off the Springboks on to the wrong trail, a change of foot and one of his own inimitable swerves saw him flying across the face and almost within touch of the nearest foes. Then a feint—and a dodge—and he was through, with only, so it seemed, the back to pass. Morkel had no chance, and the roar of 35,000 voices urged the runner on to the unmarked goal-line.

The path, however, was not quite clear, for the speedy Stegmann was doing his utmost to cut off England's centre. Another slight change of direction had to be undertaken, and this brought danger from another quarter. The race now was agonising in its excitement, but with Lowe in attendance it looked a certain try. It was, however, not to be. Three or four yards from his destination Palmer was overtaken, and a splendid tackle spoilt his attempt at passing. It was a sad pity for England that success did not attend him. For thrilling sensationalism this run lives almost by itself in the football of very recent years.

To see a real flyer get clear away from his own twenty-five is always exhilarating. When the movement is started by a beautifully judged cut through, at the pace Jock Will exhibited in the

Anglo-Scottish match in March 1914, it is electrifying. When the "stern" chaser is as fast as Lowe, the strain on the emotions continues to the goal-line. What more can anyone desire?

If proof be needed of the growing popularity and importance of Rugby football, it will be found in the greater space that newspapers devote to its consideration, and also in the very great improvement that has taken place in the literary value of the articles written. Judging from the hash they so frequently made of their accounts, it would appear that in former years any casual reporter, not at the moment occupied—and whether he knew anything about the game or not—was sent down to report even the leading matches. This reproach can no longer be made with solid justification. Speaking of the large bulk of football writing, it is now of a very much more informed, responsible and interesting character. When there is nothing of particular import to discuss, there is certainly a great temptation to writers on football to indulge in reckless and indiscriminate prophecy. Speaking as a scribe myself, apart from the moral aspects of the question—the duty towards the public, etc.—I have always held that prophesying is a very safe method of attempting to increase one's reputation. People forget the dozen times the "seer" is hopelessly in the wrong; but when the thirteenth far-fetched "vision" happens to be right, many will accept his delighted "I told you so" at the value he himself places on it, and henceforth will regard him as a person of acumen and intelligence.

Why readers of newspapers have not their senses more frequently titillated by prophetic utterance can only be because sporting writers as a race are particularly conscientious and scrupulous. Our moral rectitude, in fact, is so highly developed that often we find ourselves erring too greatly on the safe side, and putting forward as our final "selection" for some match the illuminating proposition that, provided the result is not a draw, one or other side will be victorious. This non-committal attitude, taking all the temptations into consideration, shows great strength of mind. It would be so easy to "chance one's luck" more freely, and really the remarkable frequency of unexpected results renders only a suspicion of Dame Fortune's smile necessary to ensure the prediction turning out to be correct. But chaff apart, unexpected results are in some ways not so remarkable as they appear. People lose sight of the fact that whereas it may be the most difficult thing in the world to beat the other side, there is nothing easier than to let them score a victory. So much for forecasts. I venture now to pay my tribute to the keenness and devoted interest that football writers so generally display, and which has helped the game so enormously.

Crowds at great Rugger matches have increased so considerably of late years that some remarks on the gentle art of watching football may not be out of place in the concluding paragraphs of a "Chatter" chapter.

To follow a game with understanding and discrimination, to be able to pick out the good

points of play, and to differentiate between the flashy and the really brilliant, require experience and a training in spectating, which are probably most satisfactorily acquired by a previous apprenticeship of active participation in the game itself. I do not say that a "successful" spectator need necessarily have been a player, but it must increase his prospects of becoming a trustworthy "expert," that he should have had personal practice as well as sound theory to go upon.

It has been claimed in France that they have carried the theory and science of Rugby football to a more advanced stage than has been the case in the British Isles. Judging from the highly technical and minute descriptions of possible manœuvres that appear in the French literature on the game, the contention, I verily believe, has a large substratum of correctness wherewith to justify itself. Ingenuity or cleverness in theory, however, achieves comparatively little unsupported. The test of its soundness can only be successful practice; and the question arises as to the probability of that success where personal experience on the field has not had a hand in the formulation of the theory. In two ways, it seems to me, is the criticism of a non-playing spectator likely to be at fault. He may be inclined to underestimate the difficulties of carrying out an apparently simple movement, while at the same time prepared to exaggerate those connected with what seems to be an extremely complicated effort.

The actual swerve which looked so wonderful was not *the* praiseworthy portion of the work that

culminated in that last try. Where rather Smith, the scorer, did show the calibre of his play, was in the way he worked the opposing full-back towards the centre of the field, so that he might get the chance of bringing off his well-known movement. The swerve itself, of course, was very fine, but it ought properly—if we are to keep a due sense of proportion—to be regarded in the light of an incident (however spectacular), which might not have happened but for the exceptionally brainy preliminary proceedings.

The true art of watching, I submit, consists not so much in going into ecstasy over sensationally clever play as in learning to appreciate how the situation for the performance was brought about. And it is by no means an easy thing to do. The scene shifts with such rapidity that the eye cannot always follow what is actually going on. Frequently it is impossible to discover till later who is really the principal actor on the stage; some little motion, invisible to the spectator, deceives or nonplusses the defence, and there are a thousand and one factors which at any special moment give the lie to the adage about onlookers seeing more of the game.

What, from the watcher's point of view, confuses matters very considerably is that, even in the dullest contest, there is so much going on. Naturally, one wants to see everything of importance, and yet it greatly increases the interest to notice with closer particularity what some of the individual players are doing and what are the methods they employ. At times it is quite impossible to do

both together. In so far as you are seeking to gather a general impression, concentration on individual action may throw you right off the scent. On the other hand, you may be able to learn little about special capacity or its opposite, unless you confine your attention for the time being on the particular player as much when he is in—let us hope comparative—repose as in action.

Let anybody try, for example, to pick out and to watch one forward for five minutes. Such a proceeding, done without bias or predilection, will go far to mitigate the unfriendly feelings that might subsequently be entertained towards a Selection Committee for any given choice that they may make. Frankly, I know of no more difficult task than to arrive at even an approximation of the relative merits of scrummagers by merely seeing them from outside the touch-line. It is hard enough, I should imagine, to form a reasoned opinion when one is playing next them in the pack. Results can only afford a very rough test, for how is one to know which person was really responsible for the successful hook? or for the fact that the scrum was slewed round which enabled a rush to be brought off?

More, of course, can be seen of the outsides or of forward play in the open, but here again many cautions must be remembered.

The spectator in judging the correctness or otherwise of a movement has the inestimable benefit of "after the event" experience, and it is also impossible to eliminate from one's mind the wisdom thereby acquired. Any unmitigated

ass can subsequently criticise a player to his detriment, when matters have obviously gone wrong. To criticise intelligently yet favourably requires greater knowledge. The fault, I would urge, against much football criticism is that it is too destructive in its aim; that it is too keenly on the look-out for defects, and does not sufficiently concern itself with the discovery of excellences. A valued correspondent once wrote me: "A work of art is governed not by the absence of flaws, but by the presence of qualities." This assuredly should be a maxim of what I will call the "higher watching." What is often lost sight of is that an outside in deciding what he will do generally finds two or possibly more courses open to him. He has to make up his mind on the spur of the moment which is the best, and it is the tiniest little details that may influence him. These trivialities, for instance, that his weight is on the wrong foot, cannot be appreciated because they cannot be seen from the touch-line. From there the broad result only can be observed. I am far from suggesting that a spectator should always try to find excuses for faulty play, but I do say that he will find greater pleasure out of discovering the *real* reason for failure or success. And this is not always the obvious one. A sound knowledge of the rules will further increase his enjoyment, and will enable him or her to solve the mystery of many apparent aberrations of the referee.

CHAPTER XX

CONCLUSION

Now that I am writing my last words I find that, far from having exhausted Rugby football, there are many aspects I have not been able to touch upon at all. No, the "last word" on Rugger is certainly a long way off. There are few subjects that will lend themselves to such endless variety of treatment as the one I have been trying to discuss. Football—and with all possible respect to the sister code, I venture to say Rugby, especially—is an art. It is more, it is a science. It is further a recreation. Again, it is a sport, and also a means of taking exercise. It is, above all, if rightly appreciated, a liberal education of the widest possible character. The more one considers the theory of the game and its application to the practice, the more endless seem the possibilities of further development, and the more thoroughly does one realise that without the exercise of continuous brain work and concentration physical excellence alone will take us but a short distance. Perhaps the strongest plea that can be urged in favour of Rugby football is that it brings out—or can be made to bring out—in the highest degree those attributes which are

indispensable to the possession of a proper civic spirit in a nation. The lessons that our game requires its devotees to master are the same that the country demands of its people, if patriotism in the highest sense of the term is not to degenerate into a mere pious expression of sentiment. When this point of view is fully grasped we find that half the objections commonly urged against football disappear. The art of Rugby involves very much more than just kicking a ball about or knocking other people over. Incidentally I would say to mothers and wives that, as a safety valve for masculine temper and irritability, which we hear interfere more than occasionally with the happiness of the home, there is nothing to touch it.

The danger of the game has been greatly exaggerated. The most vehement denunciations of its brutality and danger usually come from people who have never seen a game in their lives, and who are in complete ignorance of the fact that features like hacking and tripping, which did lend themselves to legitimate criticism, were abolished only *forty years* ago! As a matter of fact, Rugby is more terrible to watch than to play. How often does one see a titanic tackle result in injury to either of the parties concerned? As I have continually shown, the great majority of accidents happen when people play half-heartedly, or when they have been too lazy to take sufficient preliminary training. But I, for one, have no intention of trying to minimise the danger. (If I felt it would do good in obviating those causes of accidents just mentioned, I would dwell upon

it *ad nauseam*.) Of course there is an element of danger, and so there is in all strenuous bodily exercises. But I submit that every able-bodied, youngish male needs some kind of exertion that will stir up his wind and is more or less violent in its action. Fond as I am of golf, I think it fails in one respect: in itself it does not stir up sufficiently the system of a man under, at least, thirty-five. I interject at this point that I use the word "able-bodied" advisedly. I would earnestly advise those who are not organically sound to have themselves examined ere they play. But, we may well ask, what is the alternative to something strenuous? In many cases we know it will be loafing or possibly dissipation; the evils of which, both morally and physically, are far more dangerous than a small percentage of broken collar-bones or injured joints. On the beneficial effect that Rugby has had—not only in promoting fitness, but in preventing insidious evils—there is only one conclusion.

Consideration of the danger brings me to the question of rough and foul play. The International Board, as representing the National Unions, has set itself to put both down. It has increased in severity the actual penalties attaching to breaches of the rules and, so far as is possible, has tried to legislate against infringements of the spirit as well as of the letter of the law. Now it is obviously not within the power of any humanly constituted authority to be completely successful in this latter object without the co-operation, sincere and whole-hearted, of the players themselves.

Various little minor or technical "breakages" a referee will only be too pleased to overlook—for the sake of letting the game "rip"—if he is certain they are not committed with wilful intent. But if there is the suspicion in his mind of their not being accidental, he is bound to pull them up; and should such conduct be persisted in, he has no alternative but to allow the play to develop into a series of tedious, but necessary, penalty kicks. The worst of penalties, however much they may have been deserved, is that it is always unsatisfactory to win by their means. They are rarely a sound criterion for deciding the relative merits of opposing sides.

Now when a bad team descends to dirty work it usually does them more harm than good. By reason of their badness, the tricks are certain to be noticed and to attract the attention of the whistle. The difficulty is when a capable and clever fifteen degrades itself. Such exhibitions raise both sorrow and anger in one's breast. Sorrow that the glorious game of Rugger should be so cunningly abused; anger that there should be such misdirection of good talent.

The possibilities of righteous tactics are far from being exhausted. If to their development were devoted half the ingenuity and skill which even still is applied to rummaging in the devil's storehouse, what wonders would be shown to our delighted gaze!

Some years back there was much discussion as to whether or not the tendency to increase the pace of the game of Rugby was a step in the right



HOW TO FALL



HOW NOT TO FALL

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direction. It was admitted that for good teams, at anyrate, a fast game brought out a higher standard of play. The point at issue, however, was not whether a high standard of excellence was desirable in itself, but whether the efforts necessary to attain that greater excellence did not involve changes that would take the game out of the genus pastime or recreation, and turn it into something too strenuous for the ordinary man, who could only get Saturday afternoons off, to indulge in.

It was argued that, even if the football played was of medium quality, many got not only a large amount of pleasure out of it, but also a sufficiency of really good exercise, that if the pace became hotter the necessity for increased fitness would prevent the majority of players from participating in any but inferior matches, and that generally the difference between what might be called "class" and "mass" football would be too great to be healthy for the future of the game. It was pointed out, further, that the result of improving indefinitely the standard of Association had in many quarters ruined it from the amateur point of view, and had turned it in the large industrial centres into a spectacle rather than a sport—into a modern, if modified, replica of the gladiatorial shows of ancient Rome.

How, it was asked, if the dangerous path of improvement was followed too far, could Rugby followers hope to avoid the insidious permeation of professionalism? Taking all things into consideration, would it not be better to go on in the

same old "happy-go-lucky" way, and thereby to avoid such pitfalls. This view is rarely put forward nowadays, not because it has been shown to be wrong, but for the very welcome reason that the warning note is not at present necessary. It has been found during recent years that even in London players have managed to stand a very considerable addition to the pace; and not only to stand it, but to last better than they did under less trying conditions.

Generally speaking, the game to-day is taken more seriously, but from the right point of view. It is not regarded as a business, but the discovery has been made that improvement in play is not such a terribly difficult thing as had been imagined.

I have continually felt it necessary to utter a word of caution when putting forward a general proposition. It is rarely advisable in discussing football to lay down inexorable rules of play. One of the greatest joys of Rugby is that nearly every precept will admit of several exceptions in special circumstances.

Players must translate what they have learnt for themselves to meet the exigencies of the given moment—the unknown human quantity is capable of defeating the most beautifully worked out and most mathematically correct manœuvre on the football field.

In translating for himself our player must not fly to extremes. He must not be tempted regularly to indulge in tricks in preference to honest, sterling play. If the tricks are good, it is a pity prodigally to waste them. Their effect

will be far greater when they are brought out on special and unexpected occasions.

One of the chief factors in translating correctly is the habit of doing it quickly. Some people are born with a capacity for rapid thinking, but I have used the word "habit" because we who are slower in the intake need not despair. By taking the trouble we can "increase the pace" almost indefinitely, and we shall find that the necessary effort is more than amply repaid.

I have also endeavoured to keep before my readers the vital importance of the loss or gain of a couple of yards or of the fraction of a second. I need hardly remind them that it is a rare thing for the attack to be so superior to the defence that there is anything like six feet, or say a quarter of a second, to spare. Quick starting is more than half the battle in football, and "the best way to stop a movement is never to let it begin."

Finally, and my exhortation is more especially to London footballers: Never forget the "finishing touches." Never leave to chance or to the unaided efforts of others the making or the preventing of a try. Always back up.

Despite various Cassandra-like prophecies, I believe the game of Rugby is in a more flourishing condition than ever. I believe that, with few exceptions, the spirit in which it is played is up to the highest traditions of the past. I believe, further, that the future is bright for the brotherhood of the Egg-shaped Ball.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE LAWS OF THE GAME OF FOOTBALL AS PLAYED BY THE RUGBY FOOTBALL UNION

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Rugby game of football should be played by fifteen players on each side. The field-of-play shall not exceed 110 yards in length, nor 75 in breadth, and shall be as near these dimensions as practicable. The lines defining the boundary of the field-of-play shall be suitably marked, and shall be called the goal-lines at the ends and the touch-lines at the sides. On each goal-line and equidistant from the touch-line shall be two upright posts, called goal-posts, exceeding 11 feet in height, and placed 18 feet 6 inches apart, and joined by a cross-bar 10 feet from the ground; and the object of the game shall be to kick the ball over this cross-bar and between the posts. The game shall be played with an oval ball of as nearly as possible the following size and weight—namely,

Length	11 to 11½ in.
Length circumference	30 „ 31 „
Width circumference	25 „ 26 „
Weight	13½ „ 14½ ozs.
Hand sewn and not less than eight stitches to the inch.	

NOTE. It is the duty of the visiting team to see that the ground complies with Law 1 as to size, and is properly marked, and the dead-ball line is distinct, etc., and it is the duty of each side to see that their opponents do not play more than fifteen men. If they fail to see to these points before the game begins, no appeal can afterwards be entertained in relation thereto, except in regard to the last-mentioned point, which can be objected to during the game, but such objection will not affect any score made prior thereto.

II. GLOSSARY—DUTIES OF OFFICIALS—SCORING

Glossary of Terms

2. The following terms occur in the laws, and have the respective meanings attached to each :—

DEAD-BALL LINES. Not more than 25 yards behind and equidistant from each goal-line, and parallel thereto, shall be lines which shall be called the Dead-Ball Lines, and if the ball or player holding the ball touch or cross these lines the ball shall be dead and out of play.

IN-GOAL. Those portions of the ground immediately at the ends of the field of play and between the touch-lines, produced to the dead-ball lines, are called In-Goal. The goal-lines are In-Goal.

NOTE. As the goal-line is in-goal a try or touch-down may be obtained thereon.

If a player holding the ball in his own in-goal touches the referee, the ball is dead at the spot, and a drop-out must be taken ; except in the case of a player having run back behind his own goal-line, in which case the ball must be scrummaged at the spot whence it was carried back. Similarly a player who crosses the opponents' goal-line with the ball in his possession and before grounding it touches the referee, shall be allowed a try at the spot.

TOUCH. Those portions of the ground immediately at the sides of the field of play and between the goal-lines, if produced, are called Touch. The touch-lines and all posts and flags marking these lines, or the centre, or 25 yards' lines, are in Touch.

NOTE. A player may be in touch and yet play the ball with his foot if the ball be not in touch.

A player, provided he is not carrying the ball, may be in touch and yet score a try by touching the ball down with his hands.

The ball blown over the touch-line and blown back shall be considered as in touch.

TOUCH-IN-GOAL. Those portions of the ground immediately at the four corners of the field-of-play, and between the goal and touch-lines, if respectively pro-

duced, are called Touch-in-Goal. The corner posts and flags are in Touch-in-Goal.

NOTE. If the ball or a player holding it touch one of the corner posts or flags prior to touching down, the ball must be considered as in touch-in-goal. A player may himself be in touch-in-goal and yet play the ball with his foot, if the ball be not in touch in goal; or he may, provided he is not carrying the ball, touch it down with his hands and score a try.

A DROP-KICK is made by letting the ball fall from the hands and kicking it as it rises.

A PLACE-KICK is made by kicking the ball after it has been placed on the ground for the purpose.

A PUNT is made by letting the ball fall from the hands and kicking it before it touches the ground.

A TACKLE is when the holder of the ball is held by one or more players of the opposite side so that he cannot at any moment while he is so held, pass or play it.

NOTE. When a player is tackled with the ball it can only be brought into play with the foot, but if a player carrying the ball be thrown or knocked over, but not tackled, and the ball touches the ground, he may nevertheless get up with it and continue his run or pass it.

A SCRUMMAGE, which can only take place in the field-of-play, is formed by one or more players from each side closing round the ball when it is on the ground, or by their closing up in readiness to allow the ball to be put on the ground between them.

NOTE. The referee may order the ball to be put into the scrummage from either side he may choose.

A player shall be considered as wilfully preventing a ball being fairly put into a scrummage under Law 11 (l) if before the ball is fairly in the scrummage—

(a) He moves either of his feet beyond the front line of his forwards:

(b) Follows the ball into the scrummage with either foot.

A TRY is gained by the player who first puts his hand on the ball on the ground in his opponents' in-goal.

NOTE. It is a try if a player passes or kicks the ball back behind his own goal-line and the ball is touched down by one of his opponents.

When an attacking side in a scrummage pushes the defending side over the goal-line and touches the ball down a

try should be allowed, but if the ball be touched down by the defending side a touch-down should be allowed.

If a player touches the ball down behind his opponents' goal-line and picks it up again he should be allowed a try at the spot where it was first touched down.

In the case of the ball rolling over the goal-line and touching a spectator before a player of either side has had time to touch it down, the referee shall—

- (a) Award a touch-down if he considers the ball would have gone dead before any attacking player could have touched it, or that a defending player would have touched it first.
- (b) Award a try if he thinks but for the interference a try would have been scored.
- (c) If in doubt, give the point against the side responsible for the ground arrangements, and in doing so he shall regard all officials and spectators as offending players on the home side.

A player who crosses the opponents' goal-line with the ball in his possession, and before grounding it touches the referee, shall be allowed a try on the spot.

If the ball not in possession of a player strikes the referee or touch-judge when in in-goal, a try should be awarded to the attacking side if, in the referee's opinion, a try would undoubtedly have been obtained but for the ball touching the referee or touch-judge. The referee shall award a touch-down if he considers the ball would have gone dead or have been touched down by a defending player before any attacking player could have touched it.

A **TOUCH-DOWN** is when a player touches down as above in his own in-goal.

A **GOAL** is obtained by kicking the ball from the field-of-play, by any place-kick except a kick-off, or by any drop-kick except a drop-out, without touching the ground or any player of either side over the opponents' cross-bar, whether it touch such cross-bar or either goal-post or not.

NOTE. A goal is scored if the ball has crossed the bar although it may be blown back afterwards.

A kicker and a placer must be distinct persons, and the kicker may not under any circumstances touch the ball when on the ground, even though the charge has been disallowed.

KNOCKING-ON and **THROWING-FORWARD** are propelling the ball by the hand or arm in the direction of the opponents' in-goal; a throw out of touch cannot be claimed as a throw-forward.

NOTE. A rebound is not a knock-on and therefore no fair-catch can be made therefrom or a penalty given. This is important as some referees appear to regard a rebound as a knock-on. If a ball is passed back, but after alighting on the ground is blown forward, the pass is good, provided the ball did not alight in front of the passer.

A **FAIR-CATCH** is a catch made direct from a kick or knock-on, or throw-forward by one of the opposite side; the catcher must immediately claim the same by making a mark with his heel at the spot where he made the catch.

NOTE. If a player kicks the ball with his knee, or any part below it, and an opponent makes a fair-catch, a free-kick should be awarded.

A fair-catch can only be claimed by the catcher making his mark after he has caught the ball; the mark, however, must be made as soon after the ball is caught as possible; and in practice, referees might allow a claim when the mark was simultaneously made with the catching. A fair-catch can be made in a player's own in-goal.

KICK-OFF is a place-kick from the centre of the field-of-play; the opposite side may not stand within ten yards of the ball, nor charge until the ball be kicked, otherwise another kick-off shall be allowed. If the ball pitch in touch, the opposite side may accept the kick, have the ball kicked off again, or scrummaged in the centre of the ground.

DROP-OUT is a drop-kick from within 25 yards of the kicker's goal-line; within which distance the opposite side may not charge, otherwise another drop-out shall be allowed. If the ball pitch in touch the opposite side may accept the kick, have the ball dropped out again, or scrummaged in the centre of the twenty-five yards' line.

At kick-off the ball must reach the limit of 10 yards, and at drop-out must reach the twenty-five yards' line. If otherwise, the opposite side may have the ball re-kicked, or scrummaged, at the centre or in the middle of the twenty-five yards' line, as the case may be.

NOTE. A ball from a kick-off having reached ten yards, and then been blown back, shall be considered as in play; as also a ball having reached the twenty-five yards' line from a drop-out, and blown back.

The limit of ten yards means that distance parallel with the touch-lines.

If a player goes beyond the twenty-five yards to drop-out or if he punts, the referee must blow his whistle and order the player to take a new kick, which must be a drop within the twenty-five yards' limit.

Referees should not allow players to approach within ten yards of the half-way line at a kick-off.

OFF-SIDE. See Laws 7 and 8.

Referee and Touch-Judges

3. In all matches a REFEREE and two TOUCH-JUDGES must be appointed, the former being mutually agreed upon. The REFEREE must carry a whistle, the blowing of which shall stop the game; he must whistle in the following cases;—

- (a) When a player makes and claims a fair-catch.
- (b) When he notices rough or foul play or misconduct. For the first offence he shall either caution the player or order him off the ground, but for the second offence he must order him off. If ordered off, the player must be reported by him to this Union.

NOTE. Law 3 (b) also covers the case of wilful obstruction or interference. Referees must deal very sharply with all cases of this nature, as this has been a growing practice through players deciding to take the risk of a penalty to gain or save a try by unfair play. This practice is so contrary to the spirit of the game that the Board have decided to deal with it upon the same footing as rough or foul play or misconduct.

If the referee orders a man off, he must not allow him to take part in the game again, and must report him to the Board. The referee should also report to his Union any player he has had to warn.

- (c) When he considers that the continuation of the play is dangerous.

NOTE. The latter point must be left entirely to the referee, but the Board wish to point out that if the tackled player played the laws in the spirit in which they are written, and at once fairly parted with the ball, very few cases of danger would arise; but by holding on a short time danger may arise. In such a case the

referee should whistle and award the penalty of a free kick instead of simply ordering a scrummage on the plea of danger, as by so doing he deprives one side of an advantage, and does not inflict a penalty on the other, both of which are deserved.

If a player be hurt the referee should not whistle till the ball be dead, unless such hurt player is in a position that the continuance of play might entail further danger, and in no case should he permit a stoppage of play for more than three minutes.

- (d) When he wishes to stop the game for any purpose.

NOTE. See footnote under Section (g) of new Law.

- (e) If the ball or player running with the ball touch him, in which case it shall be scrummaged at the spot.

NOTE. A player crossing the opponents' goal-line with the ball in his possession, and then, before grounding it, touches the referee, should be allowed a try at the spot where he touched him.

If the ball not in possession of a player strikes the referee or touch-judge when in in-goal, a try should be scored for the attacking side, if, in the referee's opinion, a try would undoubtedly have been obtained, but for the ball touching the referee or touch-judge; otherwise a drop-out from the twenty-five should be ordered.

If a player running with the ball out from his own in-goal touches the referee, the ball is dead at the spot where he touches him and a drop-out must be taken; except in the case of a player having run back behind his own goal-line, in which case the ball must be scrummaged at the spot whence it was carried back.

- (f) At half-time and no-side, he being the sole time-keeper, having sole power to allow extra time for delays, but he shall not whistle for half-time or no-side until the ball be held or out of play.

NOTE. At half-time the interval is not to exceed five minutes.

- (g) When he notices any irregularity of play whereby the side committing such gain an advantage.

NOTE. This is a most important Law, and at present is not so generally observed by referees as it should be. There is unfortunately a pronounced tendency on their part to whistle immediately a law has been infringed without waiting to see who gains the advantage of the infringement. The referee should not whistle when the non-offending side gain an advantage.

- (h) When he notices a breach of Laws 5 and 15.
- (i) When he wishes to enforce any penalty.
- (j) When a goal is kicked.
- (k) When the ball goes into touch-in-goal.

NOTE. No power is given to a referee to whistle simply because a player is tackled with the ball, and this is one of the most important points to which the Board wish to direct the attention of players and referees, as the habit of whistling the moment a man is tackled spoils the game by slowing it down and taking away any advantage a side of quick followers-up would otherwise gain. When a player with the ball is tackled, a referee may only blow his whistle for one of the following cases:—

1. Law 11 (b). When such player does not *at once* fairly put the ball down.
2. Law 11 (c). When such player is on the ground and he does not *at once* fairly part with the ball, and either get up or roll away from the ball.
If a player breaks either of the above subsections, or interferes with the ball in any way while he is lying on the ground, the penalty of a free-kick should be enforced against him.
3. Law 11 (d). When a player of the opposite side prevents such player either putting the ball down or getting up, the penalty of a free-kick shall be enforced against him. The Board desire to urge referees to pay greater attention to this Law, and also to Law 20.

Powers of Referee

The Referee shall be sole judge in all matters of fact, but as to matters of law, there shall be the right to appeal to this Union.

NOTE. A referee, once he has given a decision, cannot alter it, and his decision alone is final. He may, however, consult the touch-judges in case of touch and touch-in-goal play; and when they are taking posts at kicks at goal, but the fact that it is now the duty of the touch-judges to stand at the goal-posts when kicks at goal are being taken does not affect the right of the referee to decide for himself whether a goal has been kicked or not, in the same way as he may decide whether the ball has gone into touch or not, he being the sole judge of matters of fact. Under all circumstances the referee's whistle must stop the game, even if blown inadvertently, and the referee's decision as to time must be final, even if he has kept it inaccurately. On no account must the

referee consult with any outsider except in the case of a failure of his watch, when he should in the first instance consult the touch-judges.

Duty of Touch-Judges

The Touch-Judges shall carry flags, and shall each take one side of the ground, outside the field-of-play, and the duty of each shall be to hold up his flag when and where the ball goes into touch or touch-in-goal, and also to assist the Referee, when kicks at goal from a try, fair-catch, or free-kick are being taken, each standing at a goal-post.

NOTE. It may here be emphasised that the referee is the sole judge as to matters of fact, and if he considers either touch-judge is not doing his duty fairly he not only has the right, but should certainly exercise it, of overruling any decision such touch-judge may give.

It is the duty of the touch-judge, subject to the decision of the referee, to say to which side he considers the ball in touch belongs.

Rules

4. The Captains of the respective sides shall toss for the choice of in-goals or the kick-off. Each side shall play an equal time for each in-goal, and a match shall be won by a majority of points; if no points be scored, or the number be equal, the match shall be drawn.

Scoring

The following shall be the mode of scoring :—

A Try	Equals 3 points.
A Goal from a Try (in which case the Try shall not count)	„ 5 „
A Dropped Goal (except from a Mark or a Penalty Kick)	„ 4 „
Goal from a Mark or Penalty Kick	„ 3 „

Kick-Off

5. At the time of the kick-off all the kicker's side shall be behind the ball; if any be in front, the Referee shall blow his whistle and order a scrummage where the kick-off took place. The game shall be started by a kick-off—

- (a) After a goal, by the side losing such goal, and
- (b) After half-time by the opposite side to that which started the game.

III. MODE OF PLAY—DEFINITIONS

Mode of Play

6. When once the game is started, the ball may be kicked or picked up and run with by any player who is on-side, at any time ; except that it may not be picked up—

(a) In a scrummage.

(b) When it has been put down after a tackle.

(c) When it is on the ground after a player has been tackled.

NOTE. When a player is tackled with the ball it can only be brought into play with the foot.

It may be passed or knocked from one player to another provided it be not passed, knocked, or thrown forward. If a player while holding or running with the ball be tackled, he **MUST** at once put it fairly down between him and his opponents' goal-line.

Off-Side

7. A player is placed off-side if he enters a scrummage from his opponents' side, or if the ball has been kicked, touched, or is being run with by one of his own side behind him. A player can be off-side in his opponents' in-goal, but not in his own, except where one of his side takes a free-kick behind his goal-line, in which case all of his side must be behind the ball when kicked.

NOTE. A player may play in any position as long as he is on-side and does not obstruct his opponent. He may come up to a scrummage and attempt to hook the ball out with his foot, provided the other foot is behind the ball.

8. An off-side player is placed on-side—

(a) When an opponent has run five yards with the ball.

(b) When the ball has been kicked by, or has touched an opponent.

(c) When one of his side has run in front of him with the ball.

(d) When one of his side has run in front of him, having kicked the ball when behind him.

NOTE. A player must be in the field-of-play when he puts his men on-side after kicking the ball when behind them. Whilst he is not debarred from starting running up in touch, he must get into the field-of-play as soon as possible. It must be observed that only the kicker can place the off-side players on-side.

An off-side player shall not play the ball, nor actively or passively obstruct an opponent, or approach or wilfully remain within ten yards of any opponent waiting for the ball; on any breach of this law, the opposite side shall be awarded, at their option—

(e) A free-kick, the place of such breach being taken as the mark.

(f) A scrummage at the spot where the ball was last played by the offending side before such breach occurred.

Except in the case of unintentional off-side, when a scrummage shall be formed where such breach occurred.

NOTE. It is important that referees should more strictly enforce these penalties, and it should be observed that a referee must award a free-kick if he thinks a fair-catch would have been made had not an off-side player, through his proximity and not retiring beyond the ten yards' limit, rendered such catch more difficult. For instance, a player waiting to receive the ball fails to catch it properly and it drops from his hands to the ground. An opponent who is off-side and who is standing or has approached within ten yards of him, immediately pounces upon him and prevents him recovering and playing the ball. A free-kick should be awarded as it was the duty of the off-side player to have retired beyond the ten yards' limit.

Referees too often give offending players the benefit of unintentional off-side instead of inflicting the free-kick penalty.

A player when off-side can intercept a pass from an opposing player, but he can only make a mark for a fair-catch if the pass intercepted is a forward one.

The Board has ruled that a player who has made a mis-kick when the opposite side is charging and the ball hits one of his own off-side players, cannot claim a scrummage for unintentional off-side, provided the charging side gain an advantage, even though that be a try.

Fair-Catch

9. If a player makes a fair-catch a free-kick shall be awarded, even though the whistle has been blown for a

knock-on or a throw-forward. Any player on the same side may take the kick or place the ball.

Free-Kicks

10. All free-kicks may be place-kicks, drop-kicks, or punts, but must be in the direction of the opponents' goal-line, and across the kicker's goal-line, if kicked from behind the same. They may be taken at any spot behind the mark in a line parallel to the touch-lines. In all cases the kicker's side must be behind the ball when it is kicked, except the player who may be placing the ball for a place-kick, and it is the duty of the Referee to see that the ball be kicked from the parallel line. In case of any infringement of this Law the Referee shall order a scrummage at the mark. The opposite side may come up to, and charge from anywhere on or behind a line drawn through the mark and parallel to the goal-lines, and may charge as soon as the kicker commences to run or offers to kick, or the ball be placed on the ground for a place-kick, but in case of a drop-kick or punt the kicker may always draw back, and unless he has dropped the ball the opposite side must retire to the line of the mark. But if any of the opposite side do charge before the player having the ball commences to run or offers to kick, or the ball has touched the ground for a place-kick (and this applies to tries at goal as well as free-kicks), provided the kicker has not taken his kick, the charge may be disallowed.

NOTE. In cases of players waiting to charge when kick after a try, fair-catch, or a free-kick is about to be taken, they must remain behind the goal-line or behind the mark with both feet, and any standing over the goal-line or over the mark with one foot shall be considered to have charged and the referee shall blow his whistle and award no charge; the referee shall also be particular that any side waiting behind the mark do not gradually come up beyond the mark, which act shall be considered as a charge. When a player is placing the ball he shall not wilfully do anything which may lead his opponents to think he has put the ball down when he has not; if he does the charge shall not be disallowed. Even when a charge has been disallowed the would-be chargers may, provided they remain behind the mark, jump up and attempt to stop or touch the ball; if they so touch it, no goal can be scored.

If a referee whistles to disallow a charge just as a kicker takes his kick such kicker shall have the option of another

kick—that is, if he has kicked a goal he can allow it to stand, if he has not, he can take a second kick.

If a free-kick has been granted, and after a charge by the defending side has been disallowed, the kicker touches the ball when it is on the ground, the referee must order a scrummage.

Any player except the kicker may place, or after a charge has been disallowed replace, the ball, or alter the spot for a place-kick.

IV. PENALTIES

Penalty-Kicks for Intentionally Handling Ball or Falling in Scrummage

11. Free-kicks by way of penalties shall be awarded if any player—

- (a) Intentionally either handles the ball, or falls down in a scrummage, or picks the ball out of a scrummage, or picks it up in a scrummage, either by hands or legs.

Not Putting Ball Down when Tackled

- (b) Does not immediately put it down in front of him, on being tackled.

Not Getting Up or Allowing to Get Up

- (c) Being on the ground, does not immediately get up.

NOTE. Players must understand that the penalty will be inflicted if they interfere with the ball in any way while they are lying on the ground.

- (d) Prevents an opponent getting up, or putting the ball down.

Illegally Obstructing, etc.

- (e) Illegally tackles, charges, or obstructs as in Law 8.
- (f) Wilfully tackles an opponent who has not got the ball.
- (g) Wilfully hacks, hacks-over, or trips-up.

NOTE. Although a penalty of a free-kick is now given, the referee should still caution a player or even order him off the ground if such hacking or tripping-up constitutes rough play.

Unfairly Putting Ball Down

- (h) Wilfully puts the ball unfairly into a scrummage, or, the ball having come out, wilfully returns it by hand or foot into the scrummage.

Illegal Charge

- (i) Not himself running for the ball, charges or obstructs an opponent not holding the ball.

NOTE. In cases where two opposing players are running for the ball, a player overtaking another may not shove the overtaken player from behind. If he does it is illegal and should be penalised by a free-kick. This would not, however, apply when the overtaken player has reached the ball and was stooping down to pick it up. A player running at the ball may charge an opponent also running at the ball, but such charge may only be shoulder to shoulder.

- (j) Shouts "all on-side," or words to that effect, when his players are not on-side.

NOTE. This is intended to apply chiefly to a back having kicked the ball and while following up he, or others of his side, shout "on-side" when he has not yet placed his side "on-side."

- (k) Not in a scrummage wilfully obstructs his opponents' backs by remaining on his opponents' side of the ball when it is in a scrummage.

NOTE. This prohibits forwards as well as backs standing in front of the ball so as to mark the opposing backs and should be strictly enforced. While wishful to emphasise this, the Board would also point out that it is not intended thereby to penalise a half-back who unintentionally overruns the ball in a scrummage.

- (l) Wilfully prevents the ball being fairly put into a scrummage.

NOTE. Loose head is to be dealt with as "wilfully preventing" under this head.

- (m) If any player or team wilfully and systematically break any law or laws, for which the penalty is only a scrummage, or cause unnecessary loss of time.

- (n) Being in a scrummage, lifts a foot from the ground before the ball has been put into such scrummage.

The place of infringement shall be taken as the mark, and any one of the side granted the free-kick may place or kick the ball.

On breach of subsection (j) the opposite side shall be awarded at their option—

- (a) A scrummage where the ball was last played.
- (b) A free-kick at the place of infringement.

V. GENERAL

Ball in Touch

12. The ball is in touch when it or a player carrying it touch or cross the touch-line; it shall then belong to the side opposite to that last touching it in the field-of-play, except when a player carrying the ball is forced into touch by an opponent. One of the side to whom the ball belongs shall bring it into play at the spot where it went into touch, by one of the following methods :—

- (a) Throwing it out so as to alight at right-angles to the touch-line, or
- (b) Scrummaging it at any spot at right-angles to the touch-line, ten yards from the place where it went into touch.

If the Referee blows his whistle because the ball has been thrown out so as not to alight at right angles to the touch-line, the opposite side shall bring it out as in (b).

NOTE. It is the duty of the referee when the ball is taken out of touch as in (b) to see that it is scrummaged ten yards from the touch-line.

“ Forced into touch by an opponent ” means “ physically ” forced. When a player is penalised for illegally throwing the ball out of touch, the penalty kick should be given ten yards from the touch-line.

Try at Goal

13. When the side has scored a try, the ball shall be brought from the spot where the try was gained into the field-of-play in a line parallel to the touch-lines, such distance as the placer thinks proper, and there he shall place the ball for one of his side to try and kick a goal; this place-kick is governed by Law 10 as to charging, etc.,

the mark being taken as on the goal-line. It is the duty of the Referee to see that the ball is taken out straight.

NOTE. Any player except the kicker may place, or after a charge has been disallowed, he or another of his side (other than the kicker) may replace, the ball or alter the spot for a place-kick. If a try has been scored and after a charge by the defending side has been disallowed, the kicker touches the ball when it is on the ground, the referee must order a "drop-out," the illegal act of the kicker in so handling the ball making it an unsuccessful try within the meaning of Law 15.

This instruction also applies to a kick at goal from a free-kick, but in that case a scrummage should be ordered.

Unfair Play, Allowing or Disallowing a Try

The Referee shall award a try, if, in his opinion, one would undoubtedly have been obtained but for unfair play or interference of the defending side. Or he shall disallow a try, and adjudge a touch-down, if, in his opinion, a try would undoubtedly not have been gained but for unfair play or interference of the attacking side. In case of a try so allowed the kick at goal shall be taken at any point on a line parallel to the touch-lines, and passing through the spot where the ball was when such unfair play or interference took place.

NOTE. In case of any dispute relative to a try, where it is possible an appeal may be made to the Board, referees are recommended to allow a kick at goal, so that if the Board afterwards allows the try, the goal points may be added, if the kick was successful.

In the case of a kick for goal from a mark, penalty or try, if in the opinion of the Referee the ball is illegally stopped after the kick has been taken and he is of opinion that a goal would otherwise undoubtedly have been gained, he shall have power to award the goal.

Ball Held in In-Goal

14. If the ball, when over the goal-line and in possession of a player, be fairly held by an opposing player before it is grounded, it shall be scrummaged five yards from the goal-line, opposite the spot where the ball was held.

Drop-Out

15. After an unsuccessful try, or touch-down, or if the ball after crossing the goal-line go into touch-in-goal or

touch or cross the dead-ball line, it shall be brought into play by means of a drop-out, when all the kicker's side must be behind the ball when kicked; in case any are in front the Referee shall order a scrummage on the twenty-five yards' line and equidistant from the touch-lines.

Knock-On, Throw-Forward

16. In the case of a throw-forward or knock-on, the ball shall be brought back to the place where such infringement occurred, and there be scrummaged, unless a fair-catch has been allowed, or the opposite side gain an advantage; or unless, in the opinion of the Referee, such throw-forward or knock-on is wilful, when he may award a free-kick to be taken at the spot where such infringement occurred. This shall not apply to a wilful throw-forward or knock-out into touch, which must be dealt with under Law 16(a).

16(a). If a player shall wilfully pass, knock or throw the ball into touch, the opposite side may claim either a free-kick or scrummage. Such free-kick or scrummage is to be taken at their option, either—

- (a) At any spot at right angles to the touch-line, ten yards from the place where the ball went into touch, or
- (b) At the spot where such pass, knock or throw occurred.

In the case of a free-kick the "spot," whether under (a) or (b), shall be taken as the mark. This Law shall not override the power of the Referee to allow or disallow a try under Law 13.

Pass or Carry Back over Own Goal-Line

17. If a player shall wilfully kick, pass, knock, or carry the ball back across his goal-line, and it there be made dead, the opposite side may claim that the ball shall be brought back and a scrummage formed at the spot whence it was kicked, passed, knocked or carried back. Under any other circumstances a player may touch the ball down in his own in-goal.

NOTE. Heeling back over own goal-line shall be considered as wilfully kicking back. If, when a ball is passed back, the would-be receiver fumbles it so that it goes over his own goal-line the referee shall decide whether such fumble were intentional or not, and decide accordingly.

Hacking, Tripping

18. Hacking, hacking-over, or tripping-up are illegal. The Referee shall have full power to decide what part of a player's dress, including boots and projections thereon, buckles, rings, etc., are dangerous, and having once decided that any part is dangerous shall order such player to remove the same, and shall not allow him to take further part in the game until such be removed.

If studs are worn, they shall be circular, not more than $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch long measured from the sole of the boot, and not less than $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch diameter at base and $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch at the top, and shall be fastened with not less than three nails.

NOTE. It is the duty of the referee to see that this Law is complied with by players.

Irregularities in In-Goal, not otherwise Provided for

19. In case of any law being infringed in in-goal by the attacking side, a touch-down shall be awarded, but where such breach is committed by the defending side, a scrummage shall be awarded five yards from the goal-line, opposite to the spot where the breach occurred.

Other Irregularities not Provided for

20. If when a Law is broken or any irregularity of play occurs not otherwise provided for, and any advantage is gained therefrom by the opposite side, the Referee shall not blow his whistle, but shall allow the game to proceed, but if no advantage is gained by such side, and if no other procedure is provided, the ball shall be taken back to the place where the breach of the Law or irregularity occurred and a scrummage formed there.

